



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

borders, shall resound from the Atlantic to the 'Pacific seas'; and whose renown shall be the heritage of distant generations. We trust that a voice is to arise in this Western world, which shall echo to the glorious eloquence of ancient times.

ART. III.—1. *Œuvres de Platon*. Traduites par VICTOR COUSIN. Vol. I—V. 8vo. Paris. 1822–8.

2. *Fragmens Philosophiques*. Par le même. 8vo. Paris. 1826.

3. *Cours de Philosophie*. Par M. V. COUSIN, Professeur de Philosophie à la Faculté de Lettres de Paris. 8vo. Paris. 1828.

4. *Nouveaux Fragmens Philosophiques*. Par le même. 8vo. 1828.

A FAITHFUL and elegant translation of the works of Plato would be one of the most acceptable presents of a literary kind, that could be made to the English public. That of Taylor, the only one we have, though complete, is written in so barbarous a style as to be wholly illegible; and those celebrated Dialogues, which, independently of their beauty as literary works, are immeasurably curious and valuable as the authentic contemporary reports of the lessons of Socrates, the Gospel, as it were, of the first pure and powerful proclamation of natural religion, are still inaccessible to the mere English reader. Until very recently the other modern languages were equally deficient in this respect with ours. The German version of Schleiermacher has been published within a few years, and the French one by Professor Cousin, of which we have now the satisfaction to announce the first volumes, is still unfinished. Should this be completed (as there is every reason to suppose it will be in the course of a year or two), it will in a great measure supply the defect of which we complain, though in a manner less honorable than we could have wished, to our own contemporary literature. An acquaintance with the French language is, however, so general, that most persons who would be capable of enjoying Plato in an English dress, will not probably find him much less familiar in the elegant Pa-

risian costume in which he is now presented to us. Mr Cousin unites, in a superior degree, most of the qualifications necessary for complete success in this undertaking; and whatever may be the fortune of his own philosophy (concerning which we are not very sanguine), he will, we think, at all events secure a high and durable reputation by thus connecting his name and labors with those of the eloquent disciple of Socrates. He combines, in fact, the vivacity and fine taste that are in some degree natural to his countrymen, with the indefatigable industry, the wide research, and the patient meditation, which, in these degenerate days, have been considered as almost peculiar to the Germans. The particular direction that he has given to his studies, which, it seems, have been very much turned to the writers of the Alexandrian or new Platonic school, though unfortunate, perhaps, in some respects, for his own fame, has at least served to increase his familiarity with the language and opinions of his author, and to supply him with the most complete apparatus of critical learning that could possibly be brought to bear upon his text. Being thus possessed of every facility and advantage for obtaining a correct understanding of the sense of Plato, and having at command a most flowing, beautiful, and spirited French style, he has given us a translation, which will be read with delight as a literary work by all who have a taste for intellectual enjoyment of a high order, and may at the same time be depended on as an exact representation of the celebrated original. The only defect which we have noticed in the execution of this noble enterprise is, that the translator has occasionally introduced his peculiar philosophical theories into the introductory remarks which he has prefixed to the several Dialogues. Were these theories less questionable than they often are, it would have been, perhaps, in better taste to have reserved them for his own original writings, and to have permitted his translation to remain an unsophisticated monument of the highest result in wisdom and eloquence, that unassisted human powers have yet attained. The infusion of doubtful matter is, however, very moderate, both as respects the quantity, and the tone in which it is pressed; and the work will be read, on the whole, with nearly unmingled pleasure. It will serve, we think, to extricate this elegant philosopher, whose poetical graces were the charm of all antiquity, from the dust and lumber of learned libraries, and fairly

introduce him into the circle of polite literature in which he is properly fitted to move. He will now be read wherever the French language is known, that is, throughout the civilized world, by those who read nothing which does not address itself to the taste as well as to the understanding; and we should not be surprised, if some of the fair devotees at the shrine of learning should occasionally employ a part of the awkward interval, between the finishing of the last new novel and the appearance of its forthcoming successor, in comparing the profession and proofs of Platonic attachment with which they are constantly besieged, with the theory of the subject as developed in the works of the master. The last volume will contain a life of Plato, and a full exposition of his philosophy, by Mr Cousin. When the publication shall be completed, we shall take an opportunity of returning to it, and of noticing it in greater detail.

The other works whose titles are placed at the head of this article, contain original speculations of Professor Cousin upon several points in intellectual and moral science, together with a course of public lectures on the History of Philosophy, which he delivered at Paris during the last summer. We have already taken the liberty to express our doubts of the correctness of the peculiar theories of this writer; but we would not be understood to speak with confidence on the subject, because we have not yet the means of ascertaining with precision what his views really are. Two of the volumes now before us are avowedly collections of fragments, in which the author does not profess to give a clear and connected view of his system. He has also employed in these essays a technical phraseology apparently imitated from that of the German metaphysicians, which is often nearly or quite unintelligible, and which forms a singular contrast with the simple and perspicuous style, which he has at command whenever it suits his purpose. The Lectures on Philosophy are prepared in a more popular form, but they take up successively so large a variety of subjects, that each is necessarily treated in a very summary manner; and although they profess to give a succinct sketch of the author's opinions, we are still unable to assure ourselves that we quite understand him, or, as we should rather perhaps say, we are unwilling, upon so imperfect a statement, to form a definitive judgment upon principles which, as they are here set forth, do certainly appear to us extremely hazardous, but which are

evidently the conclusions of a very able, industrious, and apparently upright and conscientious inquirer, deduced from an arduous and long continued course of reading and reflection. The author proposes to continue the explanation of his views in successive annual courses of lectures, on the various branches of intellectual and moral science ; and when these shall have brought into clearer light the real character of his system, we may, perhaps, take another occasion to examine its merits.

Mr Cousin, who is still in the prime of life, appears to have had his first philosophical education under the instructions of Mr Royer Collard, now the distinguished President of the French House of Deputies. This statesman resided at Paris during the reign of Napoleon, ostensibly in a wholly private condition, though in fact employed, as is now understood, in the capacity of a private agent of the absent king. However this may be, he certainly busied himself in giving lectures on intellectual and moral philosophy at one of the public institutions, and was the person who first brought into notice in France the writers of the modern Scotch school, particularly Reid. Mr Cousin speaks in high terms of the value of his lectures, some fragments of which have lately been published as an appendix to a French translation of Reid, which has not yet reached us. It is evident, indeed, from the profound and original notions on the theory of government, constantly thrown out in the speeches of Mr Royer Collard, that his mind is of a decidedly philosophic cast ; although other more absorbing, though perhaps not more important pursuits, have since withdrawn him entirely from the schools. His disciple does not seem to have been long contented within the somewhat narrow circle which the Edinburgh doctors have marked out as the impassable limit of the Philosophy of Mind. His studies took a wider range through the whole field of metaphysical science, from its first splendid developements in ancient Greece, down to its last multifarious and somewhat mystical exhibitions in modern Germany. After this large survey of all the various systems and theories that have successively obtained the public favor, he appears to have selected, as the object of his peculiar preference, the one which had hitherto been regarded as the least inviting and probable among them ; we mean that of the *New Platonism*, a doctrine which, as our readers are aware, prevailed in the Greek schools at the last period of their existence, and was still flourishing when they were closed by order of the Empe-

ror Justinian. This system had been generally viewed as a wholly worthless and, as it were, monstrous product of an age in which the worst kind of barbarism, that which follows a period of civilization, was gaining very fast upon the abodes of art and science. It was considered as a strange amalgamation of all the superstitious notions and practices of the time, with abstract theories which seemed to border very nearly on absolute atheism. The professors of this doctrine dealt in magical incantations, evocations of departed spirits, and various other sorts of mysteries. They publicly and zealously patronized the worship of the fantastic deities of the Greek mythology, which had been long before dethroned by the riper judgment of the people, and consigned to endless ridicule by the pen of Lucian. At the same time their bold speculations on the nature of the Supreme Mind tended to identify this sublime principle with the material universe, and thus deny its personal and separate existence. Such was the singular and repulsive character of this system, which had been rejected, almost without examination, by all preceding inquirers, and which Professor Cousin appears to have taken under his peculiar patronage. He seems to think, if we understand him rightly, that he can discern through the apparent contradictions and absurdities of the creed in question, a profound philosophy, which reconciles inconsistent theories, and explains those that are apparently absurd, by ascertaining their origin and real sense, which have commonly little or no connexion with their form, and are, for the most part, wholly unknown to the mass of the people. *The sage*, says Proclus, the great authority in this school, *is the hierophant of all the mysteries*. He views with equal respect all the various philosophical and religious systems that divide the world, and uses their forms and language with equal readiness and sincerity, because he considers them all as only different expressions, more or less appropriate and intelligible, of the grand elementary truths of religion and philosophy. He, and he only, has a key to the wild and monstrous fictions, the absurd and self-contradictory principles, which the vulgar receive without examination, and often make a merit of believing against their understanding, but which are, in fact, only parables, whose meaning and moral are for them lost. Such, according to our author, is the real secret of the new Platonic philosophy; and he seems to have adopted the idea as a fundamental tenet in his own. An *Eclectic* spirit, which inter-

pretends instead of rejecting ; seeks and consequently finds points of analogy between the various doctrines, instead of madly insisting on merely external differences,—is the true philosophical temper, and the only one that will guide the inquirer safely through the labyrinth of history.

This principle is no doubt excellent as a rule of conduct and inquiry ; but when toleration and liberality have done their best in accounting for apparent contradictions, the question still remains, What are the great elementary truths of religion and philosophy, into which our sage is to resolve all the mysteries ? and upon this question there would perhaps be more difference of opinion than our author appears to anticipate. The new Platonic theory, of which he seems to have adopted the principles as well as the method, borders, as we have remarked above, on absolute atheism ; and might not be so completely satisfactory to all inquirers as it has been to himself. However this may be, the view which he has taken of this particular system, determined, as we have already remarked, to a certain extent, the direction of his studies, and the character of his publications. The first of these was an edition of some of the unpublished works of Proclus, consisting of commentaries on Plato, which were preserved in manuscript in the royal library at Paris. His next enterprise was the translation of Plato himself, which is still in progress. While engaged in these labors, he was also much occupied with instruction. His master, Mr Royer Collard, had been appointed, after the return of the Bourbons, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of France, and Mr Cousin had been designated as adjunct professor in the same branch. They were both, however, obnoxious to the more violent royalists, as persons suspected of political liberality, and during the ascendancy of Mr de Villèle were prohibited from delivering lectures. During this period our author was employed in solitary studies and private instruction, and appeared but little before the world. His only publication was the first of the volumes of ‘*Philosophical Fragments*’ now before us, consisting in part of detached articles, mostly critical, which he had contributed to the scientific journals, and in part of extracts from his lectures, which, however, from the concise and almost enigmatical style in which they are written, afford slender means of ascertaining his opinions. A second volume under the same title has lately appeared, but has not yet reached us. At this time Mr Cousin travelled into

Germany, in company with the young Duke of Montebello. Here his reputation for literature seems to have gone before him and to have alarmed the jealousy of the Prussian police, then very much on the alert in regard to what they called 'revolutionary movements' (*demagogische Umtriebe*), a phrase which was hardly supposed before to mean the publication of editions of Proclus and translations of Plato. Our professor was politely invited to take up his lodgings in a fortress, where, in the absence of all materials for study, he had full leisure to reflect upon the difference between the habits of the tyrants of our day, and of that of his great master. Dionysius of Sicily, one of the most remarkable among the latter, had, as is well known, assiduously courted the society of Plato, and entertained him at his court, with the highest distinction. The French ministry, more inclined at heart to the modern fashion of dealing with philosophers than to the ancient one, though embarrassed in their practice by the prejudices of the weaker brethren among their countrymen, did not probably exert themselves with any great excess of zeal in his favor. After a while, however, he obtained his release, and returned to Paris. In the mean time the public opinion of the country had been rapidly changing, and liberalism was now lord of the ascendant. One of the first results of this political revolution, was the elevation of Mr Royer Collard to the Presidency of the House of Deputies; and another very natural consequence of it was the restoration of Mr Cousin to his professorial chair, and the renewal of his public lectures. He accordingly resumed his labors during the last summer, and under the encouragement afforded by these auspicious changes in the feeling of the people, he seems to have been animated with fresh alacrity, and has laid out a wide and arduous field for future exertion. His first course of lectures, which is one of the works before us, professes to give a very summary sketch of the history of philosophy, through all its various branches, sects, and divisions; the most important of which are again to be taken up separately and made the subject of distinct courses. That of the present year will be occupied with the philosophy of ancient Greece.* The one now before

* Since writing this article we learn from the French newspapers that Mr Cousin has commenced his second course of lectures, and that the subject of them is not, as he had intimated that it would be, the

us is not liable, in point of style, to the objections which we have taken the liberty to make to the 'Fragments.' It is, on the contrary, remarkably well written throughout, and rises occasionally into high flights of eloquence. The attractions of our author's manner, both as a writer and as an orator, are indeed sufficiently attested by the largeness of the audience which attended the delivery of the lectures, and by the evident signs of satisfaction with which they were constantly received. Their principal defect results from the vast extent of the subject, which renders it impossible to treat it in any of its parts with much fulness; and as the speculations in which the author indulges, are often of a novel character, it is not always easy to follow his meaning. We must also add, that although the language is generally perspicuous, the thoughts are not uniformly brought out with the precision which is so necessary in all philosophical discussions. For these reasons, and looking upon the present works as an imperfect, and, as it were, preliminary developement of our author's views, we deem it expedient, as we have remarked above, not to examine them in great detail, although many passages might be selected from them, which would furnish matter of interesting reflection. Reserving the discussion of Mr Cousin's peculiar theories for a more fitting moment, we shall rather avail ourselves of this occasion to complete the very rapid survey of the most important epochs in the history of intellectual philosophy, which we commenced in a former number.* In our review on the first part of the Baron de Gerando on this subject, we pursued the progress of the science, from its origin in Greece, down to the period of utter depression and decay that preceded the revival of letters in modern Europe. The second part of the same work, which completes the survey, by bringing it down to the present time, has not yet appeared, or at least has not yet reached us; but the publication of the works before us, in which Professor Cousin treats in his usual summary way the philosophy of the last three centuries, seems to offer a not unfavorable occasion for resuming the discussion.

The view taken by our author of the history of the period

philosophy of ancient Greece; but that of the eighteenth century. From the manner in which these lectures are mentioned in the newspapers, it appears that they have excited a strong sensation, and have even been made a matter of controversy between the different political parties.

* See North American Review, No. 43, for April, 1824.

which formed the subject of the article above alluded to, is succinctly exposed in the following remarks, which form the whole of one of the 'Philosophical Fragments,' and will give the reader a rather advantageous notion of his manner. The train of thought accords, in general, with the common opinion.

'The problem of the origin of knowledge may be solved in two different ways, by tracing it respectively to the senses or to the understanding. We meet with these different solutions at the very birth of philosophy, in the doctrines of the two Greek schools, called the Ionian and the Italian. The science advances, but the problem still remains; and the different modes of solving it continue to characterize the different sects. Pythagoras revives in Plato, who looks at everything *à priori*. Aristotle restores the Ionian system, with great improvements; deduces all his principles from a scrupulous observation of particular facts, and in establishing his theories constantly reasons *à posteriori*. The Academy and the Lyceum are the two schools into which almost all others may be resolved. They divided the ancient world, and the middle ages; and the history of the manner in which their doctrines have been modified by the state of civilization at different times, and by the character of individuals, forms, in fact, the history of philosophy. What higher praise can be given to two men than to say, that for two thousand years in succession the minds of their fellow-men have followed in their track, and can claim at best no higher honor than that of entering fully into their ideas? The encomium is immense, but must be considered as fully merited, by all who have studied the philosophy of the middle ages. Plato is a father of the church. He reigned a long time at Alexandria. Until the ascendancy of the Arabs, he was the favorite philosopher throughout Europe. All who were not skeptics, and who had endeavored to account for the origin of knowledge, adopted his theory. After the arrival of the Arabs, Aristotle took his turn, but was so ill understood, that the only result of his influence was the logic of the schools, which was little else than the art of unmeaning disputation. Important questions were no longer the objects of study, and nothing was heard but a confused jargon of controversy about absurdities invented in the leisure of the cloisters, which had no relation whatever to any real facts or interests. At the first dawn of the revival of learning, the problem of the origin of knowledge reappears, and two modes of solving it form respectively the bases of the great rival schools of *Nominalists* and *Realists*, which divided the last period of the middle ages. As antiquity was better understood, Plato and Aristotle still shared between them the empire of opinion. The former is explained by George of Trebisonde, the latter by Bessarion, and others of less celebrity. Such was the state of philosophy, before the appearance of Bacon.

‘Bacon was the first man of genius who had applied himself to the science since the time of Plato and Aristotle. The philosophers of the long intervening period are at best men of letters, and generally only monks. Bacon merits the title of the father of modern philosophy, inasmuch as he invented the method which has produced the great discoveries of modern times. He is the father of modern philosophy, not because he created, but because he pointed out the means of creating it. If I were asked what is the philosophy of Bacon, I should hold my peace, from respect for the memory of that great man, or I should say that he had none at all. His object was not to introduce particular systems, but a general method for ascertaining truth. A philosophical writer has compared Bacon to one of the guide-posts erected on the public roads, which show the way to passengers, but never move themselves. Bacon himself declared that he was not laboring to remove the obscurity from particular parts of the temple of science, but to light a torch which should illuminate the whole building. We cannot, therefore, say, *the school of Bacon*, as we say, *the school of Plato*, because Bacon had no positive doctrine; but it is his spirit which animates the whole modern philosophy, and gives it a character of precision and severity unknown to the ancients. We may, however, say, that Bacon, though he teaches no peculiar doctrine, yet by constantly recommending the experimental method, engages, as it were, to explain everything in that way. It is in this sense that he is the founder of a school, and that he belongs himself to the school of Aristotle. But I rather love to consider Bacon as independent of all schools; above both teachers and disciples; mastering all the sects of philosophy without attaching himself to any one. Under his influence the zeal for science increases, and new advances are made; but the fatal problem is still present, and the ancient solutions are still resorted to, under some variations of form. Aristotle remained in possession of the schools, until Descartes deprived him of his influence. But what were the works of Descartes? I speak now of his positive philosophy, and not of his method, the originality of which is above all praise. What, I repeat, are the works of Descartes? In substance, a commentary on Plato. The *archetypes* of the latter reappear under the name of *innate ideas*. The Academy revives, and reckons among its numerous and illustrious disciples such men as Malebranche, Arnaud, Bossuet, Fénélon, almost the whole age of Louis the Fourteenth. On the other hand, Locke attacks Descartes, and while rejecting the authority of Aristotle, becomes the restorer of his principles. The comprehensive and conciliating genius of Leibnitz endeavors to unite Locke and Descartes, Aristotle and Plato; but with all his impartiality, he evidently inclines to the latter. All the subsequent systems resolve them-

selves ultimately into those of Locke and Leibnitz. The philosophy of France and England is the offspring of the former, that of Germany of the latter. These, as we have seen, are themselves the representatives of the rival philosophers of Greece. It is therefore with these two great men we must commence all serious inquiry into the history of intellectual science.'

The first great names which we meet with in the history of modern philosophy, are those of Descartes and Bacon; but these illustrious men, as is justly remarked in the above extract, were the inventors of methods rather than of systems. Descartes asserted the right of inquiry and private judgment against the despotism of the name of Aristotle, which still remained unshaken. He affirmed that nothing must be taken on trust, and would not even admit his own existence, until he had proved it to his full satisfaction by a syllogism. This was the first step in the progress of truth, for without inquiry there could of course be no discovery. Bacon made another important advance, but still of a preparatory kind, by recommending the practice of reasoning from experiment and observation, instead of the syllogistic system, then generally in use. In doing this, he appears to have supposed himself to be substituting a new method for that of Aristotle, and accordingly gave to the work in which he announced his plan, the title of '*Novum Organon*,' a new *Machine*, or *Method*, as if in opposition to that of '*Organon*,' which the 'mighty Stagyrte' has affixed to his Logic. In reality, as we remarked on a former occasion, Bacon only restored the method of Aristotle himself, which had been kept out of view by the schoolmen, in consequence of the exaggerated importance which they had attached to some of his other ideas. Aristotle never recommended the syllogistic system as a mode of discovering new facts. He was aware that this could only be done by observation or experiment; and accordingly recommended this method, in opposition to that of his master, Plato, who believed that general ideas were an original or innate possession of the mind, and that they were the basis of all our knowledge. But in the experimental method of acquiring knowledge, the generalization of facts is hardly less important than the discovery of them, both operations being indeed indispensable; and it was to facilitate the former, that the Stagyrte laid down the rules of correct reasoning in his Logic,—a work which exhibits in a remarkable degree the power and acuteness of his extraordi-

ry mind, and which, if he had written nothing else, would have procured him a reputation of the highest order. The monks of the middle ages were so much delighted with the precision and justness of these rules, that they played at logic as a sort of interesting game, without caring or knowing whether the facts supposed in their arguments were true or false ; just as a real amateur plays at whist for counters, with as much eagerness as he would for the highest stake. Their error did not consist in employing the syllogistic method, which was excellent when applied to its proper use, but in employing it exclusively, to the neglect of observation ; and the service rendered to science by Bacon did not lie in rejecting the syllogistic method, and overthrowing the authority of Aristotle, but in completing the apparatus for discovering truth, by bringing into view another Aristotelian method, of which the schoolmen had in a manner lost sight. The glory of Aristotle was or should have been increased, instead of being diminished, by the suggestions of Bacon ; but as the monks are justly blamable for having neglected the experimental method of *the philosopher* (as they called him, *par excellence*), in their admiration of his Logic, so the great Chancellor of England is liable, perhaps, to the reproach of having, whether by design or accident, overlooked the beauty and usefulness of Aristotle's rules for generalization, in his zeal for experiment, and of having appropriated to himself the credit of inventing this latter method, which properly belonged to the same great master of science. Bacon, instead of undermining, in fact restored the philosophy of Aristotle. Since his time it has reigned with undisputed authority throughout Europe ; while by a singular sort of chance, the name of its author has labored under a sort of disgrace, from which, however, it is now fast recovering. It is probably destined to receive, through the long course of enlightened and civilized ages which, as we may hope, is now opening on the world, an intelligent homage, hardly less deep and general than the ignorant devotion of which it was formerly the object.

The necessity of inquiry being thus pointed out by Descartes, and the proper method of conducting it revived by Bacon, it it only remained to proceed in earnest to the work of actual discovery. It is the glory of Newton and Locke, to have directed their labors at once, and with all the necessary zeal and perseverance, to the most important subjects in physical and intellectual science ; and the splendor of the results cor-

responded with, or even surpassed, all that might have been expected from the excellence of the new method, and the extraordinary talent of those who made the application of it. It does not belong to our subject to insist on the value of the astonishing discoveries of Newton. The efforts of Locke in an equally or still more interesting field, were hardly less successful, although the truths he has made known, from their entirely abstract character, are somewhat less fitted to attract the attention and excite the imagination of the world at large. The services which these illustrious philosophers respectively rendered to intellectual and physical science, were, indeed, of an exactly similar character. The great principles of the Newtonian system had been suspected even by the ancients, and were probably taught in the schools of Pythagoras; but resting on insufficient grounds, they never took deep hold on the public opinion, and were afterwards lost. In modern times they were again received, as it were on credit, by several distinguished inquirers, but still, as before, in the shape of probabilities, rather than ascertained truths, and would, perhaps, have been lost again, had not the genius and patience of Newton fixed them for ever upon the basis of rigorous demonstration. In the same way, the leading principles of intellectual science had floated loosely for centuries upon the chaos of public opinion, sometimes adopted, sometimes rejected, but in either case on insufficient grounds, and always mixed up with a large alloy of fiction and absurdity. The sagacious and powerful mind of Locke seized upon them as they lay in this unsettled and corrupted state, divested them of the extraneous matter with which they were connected, placed them on a solid foundation of clear and satisfactory argument, and arranged them into a regular and symmetrical system. In the 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' intellectual science appeared for the first time in a clear and intelligible shape, unmingled with the vain and visionary fancies which had previously disfigured it, and accessible to the plain good sense of every cultivated mind. This great work is, and will probably always remain, the text-book of the noblest branch of human learning. What higher honor could mortal ambition attain or aspire to, than that of achieving it? It is not, perhaps, free from errors; for what work of the same extent was ever faultless? But of the exceptions that have been taken to it, the most considerable have been or will be overruled by the great tribunal of

public opinion ; and those that are better founded, are of too little consequence to affect its general value. The style is, on the whole, remarkably well adapted to the nature of the subject. Disdaining any effort at rhetorical elegance, which was foreign to the taste and talent of Locke, and which, could he have employed it, would have rather disguised than adorned the simple majesty of his matter, it affords, nevertheless, a fine specimen of pure, correct, perspicuous, manly, and expressive English. At a time like the present, when a fondness for meretricious ornament is often recommended by the example of powerful writers, and sanctioned by the temporary favor of the public, the works of Locke are, even in point of language, an excellent study, though they may not be a perfect model.

As the services rendered to science by Locke and Newton were in some degree similar, so their fortunes were to a certain extent parallel. The extraordinary merit of both was at once acknowledged and rewarded by their countrymen. At about the same, and that no very distant period from the one in which they flourished, their reputation spread to the continent, where they enjoyed, through the greater part of the last century, a sort of vogue, and general popularity, which is rarely accorded in any country to foreign writers, even of the highest class. Of late, however, a disposition has been manifested in certain quarters, to reverse this favorable judgment, as far as it applies to Locke. The political revolutions of the last thirty years have created a large and active party on the Continent, the adherents of which habitually denounce the 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' as the real fountain of all the mischief which more superficial professors of the same doctrine have attributed to Voltaire and Rousseau, and which sounder thinkers than those of either class, would perhaps account for by causes much more deeply seated than the publications of any contemporary or recent writers. Accustomed as we are to look up to Locke with reverence, as one of the great teachers of intellectual, moral, and religious truth ; aware that he has not only established in his great work the doctrines of natural religion, but was also a firm believer in revelation, in defence of which he published a separate treatise ; recollecting that he adorned the splendid elevation of his genius by a private life of remarkable disinterestedness and exemplary moral beauty ; looking at his character, we say, under this point of view, which is common to the whole English public on both sides of

the water, it is not without some astonishment as well as pain, that we find him branded at the present day by a party on the Continent, as the great apostle of irreligion, immorality, impurity, and sedition. We still remember the surprise with which we some years ago saw him for the first time held up in this character, in connexion with Wickliff, Hobbes, Luther, Calvin, Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, and Robespierre, (a singular assortment of names,) in an address from the municipality of Madrid to his Catholic Majesty. We have since ascertained that a similar opinion is held respecting him by other persons, who are perhaps more competent judges on a question of philosophy than the Corregidor and Alcaldes of that heroic city. In a late French work, entitled ‘Evenings at St Petersburg,’* by a writer of uncommon learning and talent, although of an eccentric cast of thought, the character and principles of Locke are attacked with a sort of fury. We subjoin a few specimens of the critical remarks of the Count de Maistre, which from their very extravagance are, we think, rather amusing than offensive.

‘No serious work is less read than that of Locke. I very much doubt whether there be a single person in Paris who has perused from beginning to end the “Essay on the Human Understanding.” It is much talked of and quoted, but always upon trust. I talked

* ‘Les Soirées de St Pétersbourg, ou Entretiens sur le Gouvernement Temporal de la Providence, suivis d’un Traité sur les Sacrifices. Par Mr le Comte Joseph de Maistre. 1822.’ This very curious, original, and entertaining production is a posthumous work of the learned author, who had previously distinguished himself by several political essays of great power. He writes under the influence of the most decided anti-revolutionary prejudices, and has besides a tincture of mysticism about him, but is always ingenious and elegant, even in his extravagances. The Count was a native of Piedmont, and occupied several important situations in the government of the kingdom of Sardinia. During the residence of his sovereign in the island of that name, he was employed as his minister plenipotentiary at the court of St Petersburg, where the writer of this article had some slight personal acquaintance with him in the year 1810. Those who have a relish for the higher kinds of intellectual entertainment, will find the ‘Evenings at St Petersburg,’ one of the most interesting productions of the present day. The author was an elder brother of Count Xavier de Maistre, a general officer in the Russian service, who is known to the public by several elegant works of a lighter cast, particularly the *Voyage autour de Ma Chambre*, and the *Lèpre d’Aoste*, both of which have lately been presented to us in an English dress, by a learned foreigner residing in this country.

about it myself for a long time, with as much intrepidity as the rest, without having read it. At length, for the greater freedom of my conscience, I went through it, pen in hand, from title-page to colophon; and I assure you that I never executed a more fatiguing task. In most other books, even of little value, there are some instructive or amusing passages, but in the *Essay* there is nothing to console you; it is as dreary as a vast Arabian desert. Not the smallest *oasis*, not a single inch of verdure, to afford the weary traveller a temporary refreshment. Name any one of the worst faults that can be found in a book, and I pledge myself to show you an example of it in Locke, wherever you choose to open him. How pitifully he reasons upon his boasted experimental system! The proper title of the work is not *An Essay on the Human Understanding*, but *An Essay on the Understanding of John Locke*. It is, in fact, a full length portrait of the author, executed to the life. We recognise at the first glance a man of natural good sense and honesty, but completely bewildered and led astray by party spirit, besides being absolutely deficient in power of thinking and in the most ordinary philosophical learning. It is really laughable to find him telling us, that he has taken up the pen in order to prescribe the rules by which a reasonable being ought to govern his conduct. His philosophy is throughout entirely superficial. There is no depth, no reach of mind, nothing thorough or profound about him. How I pity and despise the frivolous generation, that have made an oracle of him, and whose intellects are still fast *locked** in the chains of his authority. How I pity especially the French, who have neglected and insulted their own Christian Plato [Malebranche], a man for whom Locke was not fit to mend pens, and have yielded the sceptre of intellectual philosophy to this wooden idol of their own creation, this false god of the eighteenth century, who knows nothing, says nothing, does and can do nothing. Say what you will of it, the “*Essay on the Human Understanding*” is, beyond a doubt, the most mortally tiresome production, the one most completely destitute of all pretensions to taste and genius, that ever saw the light. But enough on this subject. The day will come, and is not now far distant, when Locke will be reckoned by general consent among the writers who have done the greatest amount of injury to mankind. After laying the foundations of his false and dangerous intellectual philosophy, his fatal activity was next directed to the subject of politics, and with an equally deplorable

* The pun upon the name of *Master John*, as this writer elsewhere calls our illustrious sage, is by Count de Maistre himself, who uses the French word *emprisonné*, and with much complacency explains it, in a note, by the phrase *locked fast in*.

success. He has treated the origin of laws as wretchedly as that of ideas ; and here too has advanced principles of which we have seen the results. The icy dulness of his style would have destroyed, in a great measure, the effect of his detestable doctrines ; but it was warmed into life in the hot-houses of Paris, and there brought forth the revolutionary monster that has devoured Europe. *Contempt of Locke is the beginning of wisdom.*'

We have selected these detached passages as specimens of a long article in the form of dialogue, containing a detailed criticism on some of Locke's principles which we have not room to quote. Extraordinary as this view of his philosophy will probably be thought by our readers, we have no hesitation in saying, that we believe it to be one which now prevails pretty extensively on the Continent of Europe. It is not confined to the *legitimate* or anti-revolutionary political party, of which the lively and peremptory Chancellor of Sardinia was a warm adherent, but is held by many adepts of the liberal school. Professor Cousin, for example, speaks of Locke in the following manner in the History of Philosophy now before us ;

'Locke, gentlemen, is a disciple of Descartes as well as Leibnitz, that is, he follows the method of free inquiry, rejecting all authority but that of reason, and commencing by an endeavor to ascertain the ideas of which we are naturally conscious. But his review of these ideas is not complete ; and although he does not wholly overlook the internal part of our nature, that is, liberty and intelligence, he nevertheless attaches himself principally to the external part, or sensation. The philosophy of Locke is a branch of that of Descartes, but it is a partial and exclusive system. It has been carried out into all its consequences, but not in the country of the author. England, gentlemen, is a powerful island, and in England everything wears an insular character ; everything is bounded by fixed limits ; nothing spreads itself out into a large expanded shape. England is not destitute of invention ; but history proves that she does not possess that power of generalization and induction, which is necessary to the full development of any great principle. Compare the English political revolution with ours, and remark the essential difference between the characters of the two. On one side everything is local,—the effect of secondary causes ; on the other all is general and ideal. Before the principles of the English political reform could acquire influence and produce their proper fruits, it was essential that they should be transported to the other side of the Channel. In the same way it was necessary that the sensual philosophy should cross the Channel, and land among a people who, for a number of rea-

sons,—such as the universality of their language, their central situation in Europe, their character at once firm and supple, their power of thinking, their habit of fearless acquiescence in all the consequences of acknowledged principles, and their remarkable facility of generalization,—were best fitted to give it a full developement. It was necessary in short that the philosophy of Locke should be received in France. There only has it borne its fruits, and thence it is that it has spread itself through the whole of Europe.

‘In the works of Locke, the sensual system is still incomplete. The English philosopher attaches great importance to sensation, but he leaves some room for reflection. It was a Frenchman who gave to this theory its true character and systematic unity, by suppressing the insignificant and equivocal functions which Locke has assigned to this latter faculty. Condillac demonstrated that since reflection, as understood by Locke, had no original notions proper to itself,—no laws derived from its own essence and which it might add to and *impose upon* the ideas received through the senses,—it was in fact nothing but a modified sensation. He demonstrated that the several modes of reflection, which according to Locke constitute our intellectual faculties, were only so many forms of sensation; and hence that sensation, either in its original shape of an impression on our material organs or in that of abstraction and generalization, is the only element of knowledge and the only instrument of acquiring it. On the system of Condillac, sensation, being once given by the material world, manages all the business of the mind without requiring any assistance. As circumstances change, this power becomes attention, comparison, judgment, reason, and even the will. It becomes the only object of consciousness. It becomes in fact the whole mind. What then is the mind, thus constituted? Evidently nothing more than a collection of all our sensations, whether generalized or not, destitute of any principle of unity, substance, or action. I here simply state the theory of Condillac, without pretending to criticize it; but I beg you to notice the boldness with which this writer reduces everything to sensation, and pushes the philosophy of Locke to its natural and necessary results. Considered under this point of view, the “Treatise on Sensation” is a real historical monument. In this way Condillac perfected the metaphysical part of the sensual system. The moral part, which had not yet been developed, was supplied by Helvetius. Our sensations not only inform us of the existence of external objects, but create in us emotions of pain and pleasure. Avoid then those sensations that give pain, seek those that give pleasure,—such is the sum and substance of all morality. Saint Lambert composed upon the basis of this principle a complete code of ethics, in which the gratification of the

senses is represented as the essence of virtue, and the pleasure of the individual its only object. The same system was carried into political science. It was declared, and even decreed, that nations, like individuals, are bound by no moral law but that of promoting their own interest, of which they are also the exclusive judges. The will of the people is therefore the only criterion of political justice; and the sovereignty of the people, the only legitimate principle of government.* The theory was applied to other sciences, as for example to medicine. As the mind was supposed to be only a bundle of sensible ideas, so life was considered as a collection of functions without any principle of unity. The harmony existing among these functions is, on this system, a very singular

* In representing the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people as implying a denial of the reality of moral distinctions, Mr Cousin has, we think, given an example of the summary method of proceeding from premises to conclusions by leaping *à pieds joints*, which he imputes below to the medical philosophers, and of which we shall have occasion to notice another instance in his own reasoning. Admitting (what we hold to be beyond dispute) that the law of nature, which expresses the will of its Divine Author, is an obligatory rule of conduct, it follows that in all cases, excepting the extraordinary one of an immediate revelation, there must be somewhere on earth a power competent to declare and enforce this law. Every individual possesses and exercises this power for himself as far as he has a right to regulate his own conduct, or in the words of St Paul is a *law unto himself*. But man naturally exists not merely as an individual, but as a member of society, and is bound to obey the law of nature which is applicable to him in the latter capacity, as declared by the competent authority in the society to which he belongs. Who then possesses this competent authority? The doctrine of the sovereignty of the people merely affirms, as we understand it at least, that the right of giving laws to a society belongs to the society itself, and not to any other society, or to any individual or family, as a natural privilege. It is obvious that this theory is perfectly consistent with the reality of moral distinctions, and that it does not imply the exclusive legitimacy of any particular form of government.—No form of government can be rationally defended in theory, excepting as the one in which the nation can best exercise its natural right of sovereignty. The doctrine does not even imply that the numerical majority of the members of a society have a natural right to declare the law. The right of sovereignty, which the people incontestibly possesses, belongs to it, not as a collection of individuals, but as a body, and can only be rightfully exercised in such forms as accord with the suggestions of reason and natural feelings. But whether the political power of a community be exercised by all its members in person as in pure democracies, by elected representatives as with us, or by hereditary representatives as in monarchical governments, it is equally exercised in all these cases, *n'en déplaît à M. Cousin*, under a strict moral responsibility.

fact; but its partisans leaped *à pieds joints* over all difficulties, and medicine also was provided with its experimental philosophy.'

Although the tone and temper of the two writers from whose works we have made these extracts be essentially different, it is obvious that their objections to the system of Locke are substantially the same. They both belong to a school of philosophy which may be looked upon as a reaction or indirect result of the French Revolution. The long train of disasters which accompanied that great political crisis, naturally excited a strong prejudice against the moral and political theories which prevailed about the time of its opening, and were supposed to be, to a certain extent, the causes of its occurrence and of the unfortunate direction which it pursued for so many years. These moral and political theories were also believed, whether correctly or not, to be essentially connected with the metaphysical systems of the day; and the latter again, having been published and generally received as deductions from the philosophy of Locke, were somewhat too hastily identified with his opinions. Under these circumstances it appeared necessary, in order to furnish a complete refutation of the political doctrines of the French revolutionists, to go back to the source of the evil, in the 'Essay on the Human Understanding.' The leading principle of this work, that all our ideas are either received through the senses or obtained by reflection upon such as are so received, was looked upon as the root of all the modern heresies; and was therefore to be set aside at all hazards. In order to contest this principle with success, it was necessary to show, that such of our notions as are not the immediate results of sensation are original possessions of the mind. This is the old theory of *innate ideas*, which has accordingly been revived with a sort of passion by most of the anti-revolutionary philosophers of the present day, and has even been adopted, as we have already remarked, by many of the adherents of the liberal political school; who while they approve the results of the Revolution, are anxious to shake off all responsibility for most of the acts and even opinions of its authors. Mr Cousin and Count de Maistre are both declared partisans of this theory. Mr de Maistre even goes the length of asserting that all our ideas are innate. We shall have occasion to offer a few remarks on this question in noticing the opinions of the modern German philosophers, who generally take their departure from the same principle. In the mean time we may

observe here, that in the course of reasoning which brings home to Locke the responsibility for the moral and political theories of the French Revolutionists, there is more than one example of the same summary mode of getting over the ground which Professor Cousin attributes to the medical philosophers of the last century. We doubt, in the first place, whether there be any such close and necessary connexion as the learned professor appears to suppose between the metaphysical theories of Condillac and the moral and political doctrines that prevailed in France at about the same time. It is certain at least that the two systems were not professed by the same persons. The 'Spirit of Laws,' the text-book of the liberal political school, was openly ridiculed by Helvetius, who thought himself, and was generally thought at the time by his countrymen, a much more thorough and profound reasoner than Montesquieu.*

* 'I know not what our friend the President means,' said Helvetius, in a letter to one of his correspondents written soon after the publication of the *Spirit of Laws*, 'I know not what our friend the President means by his three forms of government, each having its different principle. I am acquainted with only two sorts of governments; one the good, the object of which would be to promote the happiness of the people, but of which we have hitherto had no examples, and the other the bad, comprehending all the known instances, and of which the only principle is to squeeze as much money as possible out of the pockets of the subject.' This petulant sally was considered at the time as evincing much more depth and power of thought, than the definition of law by Montesquieu. It has been well observed that a person who accuses all men of being governed by corrupt motives, convicts at least one. Supposing this to be true, what opinion are we to form of the writer of the following passages in the work of Helvetius? '*Man hates dependence; hence perhaps arises the hatred he naturally feels for his father and mother.*' SA HAINE POUR SES PERE ET MERE!!! Had this miscreant then no parents? Was he, as the despairing Queen of Carthage in Virgil declares her false-hearted lover to have been, born out of the cleft of a rock and suckled by a she-tiger?

'Duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admôrunt ubera tigres.'

We are bound perhaps in charity to believe, that Helvetius was not quite so bad as he has here represented himself, and that he was so far deluded by his own wretched sophistry as to mistake and belie the feelings of his heart. Such however was the morality which the best informed part of society, the sons and daughters, the fathers and mothers, of France, received and applauded half a century ago with a kind of general enthusiasm. Can we wonder that such a society should have been visited by the judgments of that God who avenges with unheard-of tortures even a look that threatens a parent with in-

Rousseau, the most ardent and eloquent apostle of the new theory of government, was at open war with the philosophers, and a decided spiritualist in metaphysics and religion.* But without insisting on this point, which does not belong to our present subject, we may go farther, and assume with little danger of mistake that the metaphysical theories of Condillac are not either necessary or natural deductions from the principles of Locke; that the latter is of course not responsible for the errors contained in them; and that these errors, with their practical moral and political results, whatever they may have been, are justly imputable to no one but their actual and immediate author, that is, to Condillac himself. This observation naturally leads us to make a few remarks upon the philosophy of that writer, undoubtedly the most distinguished, with all his errors, of the disciples of Locke.

The object of Condillac, as is correctly observed by Mr Cousin in the above extract, was to simplify and complete the philosophy of his great master, which had just been made known on the Continent at the time when he wrote. Assuming the leading principle of Locke, that all our knowledge is the fruit of sensation or reflection, and not an original possession of the mind, he undertook to prove that the abstract notions which are referred by Locke to the latter source, being only generalizations of sensible ideas, are in fact sensible ideas under another form. But, as sensation is the appropriate name for the faculty by which we take cognizance of sensible ideas, if it be admitted that all our ideas are substantially of this description, it follows that all our intellectual faculties are in substance nothing more than modes of sensation. Imagination and memory are merely sensation representing to itself, under the same or different combinations, the ideas which it has already acquired. Reason is sensation comparing and developing two or more ideas. Thus far the language used, though in our opinion exceedingly objectionable, might perhaps admit of such explanations as would make it appear consistent with facts. But Condillac proceeds a great deal farther. Our affections as well as our perceptions are the results of the action of external

sult? 'The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.'

* Hume, it is well known, declared that Rousseau was little better than a Christian in his own way.

objects on our senses. These therefore in all their variety,—love, hatred, hope, fear, astonishment, anger, and the rest, are only so many modes of sensation ; that is, loving, hating, hoping, fearing, and wondering, are only other names for seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling. The will itself, which is only the affection or desire that predominates for the moment over all others, comes under the same general category, and is only another mode of sensation ; which is thus made to comprehend our whole moral as well as intellectual being, or, in the language of Condillac himself, *the whole soul*. In support of his theory, this writer brought forward his celebrated illustration of the Statue, and explained at great length, in conformity with these principles, how, being once endowed with sensation, an inanimate figure would gradually acquire by the mere exercise and developement of this faculty a complete and perfect human intellect. Saint Lambert, in his ‘Catechism of Moral Philosophy,’ accordingly defines man as *an organized and sentient mass, which acquires understanding (l'esprit) from the objects around, of and from its own wants.**

It is, as we conceive, quite unnecessary to enter into a formal argument against the correctness of these extraordinary principles, which are sufficiently refuted by a reference to the Dictionary. To say that loving, hating, wondering, and willing, are only different names for seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting, is an error that falls under the jurisdiction of Johnson, or the French Academy, rather than that of Locke and Aristotle. It is more important to our present purpose to remark, that the absurdity of these notions is imputable exclusively to Condillac and his followers, and in no degree to the great master whose theory they suppose themselves to be simplifying and bringing to perfection. As there are, by general acknowledgment, no traces of any such opinions in the works of Locke, so there is evidently no connexion between them and the principles which are in fact set forth in the ‘Essay on the Human Understanding.’ Locke no doubt affirms that we can only exercise our intellectual faculties upon ideas received through the senses ; but does this proposition tend in the most remote degree to prove that

* Were the question merely of the power and beauty of different forms of expression, independently of any higher considerations, we confess that we should prefer the language of Scripture on the same subject ;—*Surely there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty hath given him understanding.*

our intellectual and even moral faculties,—our whole soul,—resolves itself into the power of receiving ideas through the senses? Because a sculptor can only exercise his talent upon the block of marble which he receives into his workshop, does it follow that his talent resolves itself into the capacity of receiving a block of marble? nay, that the sculptor himself (for such seems to be the last conclusion) is the block of marble which he receives and works upon? It is obvious that there is not only no necessary connexion between the propositions, but that they are as remote from each other as Indus from the Pole. We cannot help feeling some surprise that so acute a writer as Mr Cousin, however prejudiced in favor of his own doctrine of innate ideas, should acquiesce in the reasoning by which Condillac deduces his conclusions from the premises of Locke; and we deem it necessary to take into view the political reaction by which he and most other contemporary philosophers of the Continent are to a greater or less extent influenced, in order to conceive the possibility of such an error.

Such however is the system of Condillac, which partly by the effect of the agreeable and perspicuous style in which it was explained, and partly from its tendency, real or supposed, to favor the moral and political theories of the day, was received with extraordinary favor, and obtained a pretty general currency through the whole Continent of Europe. While these conclusions were drawn from the philosophy of Locke in one quarter, others of a different but not more correct or agreeable character had been supposed to follow from it in another. Assuming the opinion, which appears to be countenanced by Locke, that the mind in the act of perception takes cognizance only of the organic change in the body which precedes this act, and not of the external object to which we refer the perception, Berkeley concluded that we have in fact no knowledge of anything but this organic change in ourselves; and that the existence of an external object, or in general of the material world around us, is a mere supposition, which may or may not be true, but of which at all events we can have no evidence. This was by no means a new theory, and is even characterized as a hoary doctrine by the Bishop of Cloyne himself. It prevailed occasionally in the Grecian schools, and was perhaps one of those which Cicero had in view when he remarked, that there was no absurdity, however glaring, which had not at one time or another been seriously asserted as a truth by some phi-

losopher. It has lately been ascertained that the same doctrine was anciently taught in India, where it is attributed to a 'saint or sage,' called Vyasa, who has been accordingly pronounced, by a modern English poet,

'The immortal BERKELEY of that elder age.'

The recurrence of this strange hypothesis in so many different and independent quarters, furnishes a remarkable example of the regularity with which the mind, in speculating on any subject, runs through and exhausts the whole circle of possible suppositions, including those that are apparently the most unnatural. While Berkeley was thus undermining the existence of matter, Hume was carrying an exterminating war into the realms of spirit. Admitting the theory of Locke, that all our ideas are the products either of sensation, or of reflection upon sensible ideas, he affirmed that reflection could do no more than combine or analyse anew the materials upon which it works, and that we cannot possibly possess any idea which is not originally conveyed to us through the senses. Now, our notion of the relation of cause and effect is not directly given to us by the senses. Causes and effects are things which we can neither hear, see, feel, taste, nor smell. Since then we cannot have obtained this notion in the regular and only possible way, it follows of course, according to Hume, that we do not possess it, and that the idea we mean to express when we speak of causes and effects is merely that of *antecedents* and *consequents in time*. This theory, which, like that of Berkeley, was only a new edition of an old absurdity, not only unsettled all the certainty of our ordinary knowledge, but struck a fatal blow at the very foundation of natural religion; while by another argument, directed against the evidence of miracles, the same ingenious philosopher conceived that he had effectually disposed of revelation. At this portentous wreck of matter, and crush of worlds, both spiritual and sensible, minds even of some steadiness might well be alarmed; and many intelligent persons forgetting the *tenax propositi* of the sage in Horace under similar circumstances, lost their confidence in their old principles, and cast about anxiously for some new ones which would serve to secure their faith and hope against the threatened ruin. The result of the researches made for this purpose was, the rise of two new schools in philosophy, commonly known as the *Scotch* and *German*, which, though differing essentially on many other points, agree in abandoning the theory of Locke

on the origin of knowledge, and reviving the ancient doctrine of *innate* or *original ideas*. Both these schools have exercised, and continue to exercise, a strong influence on public opinion. Their rise and progress up to the present time form the main subject of the history of philosophy during the last half century ; and the hasty remarks which we have to offer respecting them, will occupy the few remaining pages which we are able to devote to this review.

It may be proper however to premise, as we have indeed already intimated, that in our opinion the attack upon received principles, which led to the formation of these two schools, was by no means so formidable as their founders appear to have supposed, and that the alarm, created by the sophistry of Berkeley and Hume, was in a great measure groundless. Metaphysical writers have generally acquiesced with too much readiness in the assertion, that the existence of the material world is not susceptible of rigorous demonstration. The ultimate facts at which we arrive in tracing our knowledge to its sources, are those of perception and consciousness ; and if these were denied, they would of course admit of no proof. But the facts of perception and consciousness are not contested ; and the question at issue turns upon the reality of the objects of these operations of the mind, and of the mind itself. Now, assuming the facts of consciousness and perception, it is clear that the existence of the mind and of the material world is a necessary consequence from them, because every act supposes, that is, proves the existence of an agent, and when the action is transitive, of an object acted on. *Cogito, ergo sum*, ‘I think, therefore I am,’ was the argument employed by Descartes to satisfy himself of his own existence ; and notwithstanding the ridicule that has sometimes been thrown upon it, is evidently a perfectly logical and conclusive one. It has been objected that the act of thinking *supposes* the existence of a thinking being, which is the point to be proved, and that the argument therefore involves the sophism called *petitio principii*, or begging the question. But this pretended objection is no other than the argument itself stated in different words. That the act of thinking supposes the existence of a thinking being is the precise idea which Descartes has expressed under the form of the regular enthymem, ‘*I think, therefore I am.*’ Hence a person who makes this objection, instead of refuting the argument of Descartes, only expresses his acquiescence in it, or rather re-

peats it under another form. The conclusion in favor of the existence of the object acted on, that is, in this case, of the material world, is obviously not less direct and incontrovertible. It is impossible, indeed, that we should feel the certainty which we do feel of our own existence, and of that of the material world, unless these facts were susceptible of rigorous demonstration. Facts that are objects of sensation or consciousness, possess the certainty which results from that sort of evidence. But all others,—and the existence of our minds and the material world is of the number,—can only be certain as far as they are correct deductions from the former. Now any fact which is a correct deduction from another, or several others, is of course demonstrable; since demonstration is nothing more than a repetition of the process of induction, by which the knowledge of the fact to be demonstrated was originally acquired. The assertion which we often hear made, that some abstract principles, which are yet certain, are of too elementary and simple a kind to be strictly proved, is clearly erroneous, and tends to introduce uncertainty and confusion into all our notions of the nature of evidence.

The reality of the material world is thus susceptible of a very easy, and at the same time perfectly rigorous demonstration; nor is the nature of the proof at all varied, whether we suppose the mind, in the act of perception, to take cognizance of the external object, or only of an organic change in our own bodies. In the one case, the act of perception proves the existence of the external object, and in the other, of our own bodies; and the existence of either, of course, carries with it that of the whole material world. The sophistry of Berkeley was therefore far from being so dangerous as it seems to have been considered; and that of Hume, concerning our idea of the relation of cause and effect, is even still less plausible. It is in the first place certain, that when we think or speak of this relation, we mean something entirely different from succession in the order of time, and that we have in our minds a distinct notion to which we give the name of *power*. If this notion, which, as Hume justly supposes, is not a direct result of sensation, were not correctly deduced by reflection from those that are, it would follow, not that we do not possess any such idea, but that we possess besides the faculties of sensation and reflection some other source of ideas through which we have obtained the one in question. Such accordingly has been the conclu-

sion of the German metaphysicians, who revived the doctrine of *innate ideas*, principally for the purpose of discovering a legitimate origin for our notion of the relation between causes and effects. But this on other accounts very improbable theory, is in our opinion wholly unnecessary for the purpose for which they have called it in; and we see nothing whatever to object to, in the reasoning by which Locke derives the notion of *power* from our observation of the acts of our own minds upon the objects around us, and of these upon each other. Indeed the objection of Hume, if it had any force, would not only deprive us of the notion of *power*, but of all our general and abstract ideas, none of them being, in the form in which we possess them, the direct results of sensation. Take for example the notion of *fame*. The poet Goldsmith having accidentally seen a copy of one of his works lying, elegantly bound, upon the table of some nobleman, related the circumstance with much satisfaction to his friend Dr Johnson, and concluded by remarking, 'This, Dr Johnson, is fame.' 'Nay, sir,' said the Doctor in reply, 'I should have deemed it a far more certain evidence of a just and enviable reputation, to have found the book in the cottage of a peasant and in tatters.' Here the direct objects of sensation are an elegantly bound volume, and a tattered one, upon the view of one or the other of which the observers are supposed to obtain their ideas of the author's fame. Can it be pretended that the speakers in this little dialogue had in their minds no meaning corresponding with the word *fame*, because there is in fact nothing in the sensible idea of an elegant or a tattered book that answers to it? The number of our ideas which have no direct prototype in sensible objects, is, beyond a doubt, much larger than that of those which have one. The celebrated author of the *Intellectual System*, being one day in conversation with a friend who affirmed that all our ideas were received through the senses, invited the latter to take up any book on the table, and offered to prove that the first word he should fix upon would express an idea that was not of this class, so confident was he that those of the other were much more numerous. His friend accepting the challenge, turned to the beginning of Cicero's Treatise on Duties, which opens with the word *quanquam*. 'There,' said Cudworth, 'let me know through which of your senses, you get the idea conveyed by *quanquam*.' This great philosopher, who was a partisan of the theory of innate ideas,

supposed that all notions, not received through the senses, were original possessions of the mind, forming, as it were, a part of its substance ; but the illustration is equally conclusive in favor of the reality of our general notions, if we suppose, with Locke, that they are not innate, but obtained by reflection upon sensible ones. Few persons indeed would go the length of denying *en masse* the reality of all our general ideas ; and the mere consideration that the argument of Hume is as fatal to all the rest, as it is to that of *power*, is sufficient to show that it is utterly destitute of force, and even plausibility. The easy acquiescence which was given to it (notwithstanding its dangerous consequences) by so many thinking men, and the favor which it continues to enjoy even in our own day, are striking proofs of the facility with which ingenious paradoxes are adopted, and of the tenacity with which they retain their hold upon public opinion.

For these reasons we are inclined to consider the alarm created by the skeptical philosophers of the last century, as in a great measure needless. It was however, at the time, perfectly sincere, since, as we have already remarked, it induced many judicious men, although they could not bring themselves to assent to the dangerous consequences in morals and religion which the skeptics had deduced from these doctrines, to abandon the principles upon which they had formerly relied in proof of the most important truths, and seek for others more substantial. Reid, the founder of the Scotch philosophy, first distinguished himself by an attempt to show that the mind in the act of perception takes a direct cognizance of the object perceived, and not (as, according to him, was generally supposed before) of an organic change in our bodies. A late writer has endeavored to show that Reid was mistaken in his view of the doctrine of preceding philosophers, and that his pretended improvement was in reality no other than the common opinion ; but although the language both of Reid and of preceding writers, may not be always perfectly consistent with itself, there are evidently two opposite theories on the subject, one of which supposes that we naturally refer our perceptions to external objects, and the other, that we learn to make this reference by experience. The former opinion was that of Reid, the latter that of most preceding philosophers, including Locke. It also appears to be adopted by Brown (the writer to whom we just alluded), who thus differs from Reid himself, although he

affirms, for the purpose of contesting the claims of that philosopher to originality, that his theory is the same with the one previously received, and that there is no difference of opinion upon the subject. The improvement of Reid appears to us to be real, but belongs to physiology rather than philosophy, and had little or no connexion with the question of the existence of the material world; which, as we have remarked above, is equally demonstrated by the fact of perception, whether the immediate objects of that operation of the mind be external bodies, or the organic changes in our own. Not having observed, as it seems, that existence is implied in the facts of perception and consciousness, and of course proved by them, Reid laid the foundation of the certainty we feel in this respect, in a supposed instinctive and irresistible belief, of which all men are conscious without being able to give any reason for it. This is the leading principle in the Scotch school of philosophy, which has accordingly been sometimes called the philosophy of *common sense*. Mr Cousin summarily gives his opinion of the value of this idea in the following passage.

‘It was in England that the philosophy of sensation made its first appearance, and the first attack upon the same philosophy proceeded from a province of that kingdom. I define the Scotch philosophy, gentlemen, an honorable protest made by common sense against the extravagances of the last consequences of the sensual system. Let this be its title to the esteem of the wise and good. But this doctrine was not less incomplete in its own way, than that of Locke in his. The Scotch philosophers contented themselves with bringing into notice some of the elements of our nature which had been overlooked,—with restoring, as it were, to their proper places, some of the ideas originally inherent in our minds, and which they describe under the character now generally attributed to them; but they did not even attempt to enumerate all the ideas of this class, to trace them to their origin, or to follow them out into their consequences. Their doctrine contains an introduction only to the philosophy of the mind, but has no regular logic or metaphysics, no theology or theory of the spiritual world, and a mere smattering of morals and politics. The merits and defects of the Scotch are the same with those of Locke. They have perspicuity and good sense, but they want power, reach of mind, precision and exactness;—not to mention an almost total deficiency of learning. The common sense to which they appeal, is no doubt the basis of science; the point from which it takes its departure, and to which it regularly returns. Common sense serves admirably to protect the uninstructed part of the

world from the inroads of materialism, but is after all an entirely different thing from science, which is the result of the complete development of all our intellectual faculties. As the sensual philosophy never appeared in its full and perfect form in the hands of Locke, so the doctrine of idealism would never have acquired from the timid speculations of the worthy professors of Edinburgh, the brilliant and masculine character which it wanted in order to attract the attention of Europe, and struggle successfully on that vast theatre with the seduction and talent of the opposite school. The philosophy of Locke was obliged to cross the channel in order to make its fortune ; and idealism required a more generous soil than that of Scotland, before it could flourish with much luxuriance, or produce its proper fruits.

‘The common-sense school was represented in France by Turgot and J. J. Rousseau. The former was early withdrawn from science by political occupations, and had only time to make some passing attacks of little importance, upon the worst consequences of the theory of Condillac. The latter was rather a man of letters than a philosopher ; and when he undertook to oppose the prevailing opinions, only exhausted his eccentric genius in sentimental protestations, which hardly deserve notice in the history of science.’

The correctness of the above remarks upon the leading principle of the Scotch philosophy, is, we think, quite obvious. Common sense and philosophy are different modes of stating the same facts. Their results naturally check and correct each other ; but for that very reason it is clear, that, as processes, they can have nothing in common. To suppose that we can found philosophy on common sense, would be like supposing that we can take a lunar observation by throwing the log, because both these methods are employed to ascertain the longitude of a ship at sea. The skeptical writers, and particularly Hume, are the first to admit that their theories are in direct opposition to common sense ; but they affirm that a rigorous examination and analysis of the phenomena that present themselves to the student of intellectual philosophy, lead to different conclusions from those which are naturally drawn upon a merely superficial view ; just as the science of astronomy corrects, and even reverses, in many important particulars, the common opinion founded on the evidence of our senses respecting the appearance and motions of the heavenly bodies. To this we may answer with perfect propriety, for all practical purposes, that we would rather trust the common sense of the

world, including the skeptics themselves, than the philosophy of two or three individuals. This, we say, is a perfectly good answer for practical purposes, and is accordingly the one which the world habitually makes ; but it is obviously not even in form the basis of an anti-skeptical system of philosophy. It amounts to saying,—We cannot believe your doctrine, although we do not know how to refute it ; and instead of being a scientific theory, is, on the contrary, a confession that we are aware that a new one is necessary, but that we are unable to furnish it ourselves.

If then the writers of the Scotch school mean to represent their elementary principles as mere expressions of the common opinion of the world, and as being in that character the incontestable foundations for all our knowledge, it is evident that their propositions have not even the form of a philosophical system. It is probable, however, although their language on this head is not so precise as might be wished, that they mean to represent the common opinion of the world in favor of their elementary principles, as a kind of *instinctive conviction*, which forms, as it were, a part of the original substance of the mind of every individual. Thus explained, their views assume, no doubt, the form of a scientific theory ; but they now become liable to other objections, some of which are correctly indicated by Professor Cousin in the above extract. Instinctive convictions of the truth of principles suppose, of course, the possession of the ideas of which the agreement or disagreement is indicated in these principles. An instinctive conviction, for example, of the existence of the material world, supposes the possession, anterior to or independent of perception, of the numerous ideas, intellectual and sensible, implied in this conviction. The Scotch philosophy, thus explained, amounts to the theory of *idealism* or *innate ideas*, and in order to be admitted, must be developed and proved as such. In its present shape it will be held in little esteem, either by the partisans or the opponents of idealism ; since it must be viewed by the latter as essentially false, and by the former as a defective and unsatisfactory statement of what they believe to be the truth.

It would seem therefore that the Scotch philosophy, considered as an attempt to reform the theory of Locke respecting the origin of knowledge, and establish a new system upon that subject, is of little value. We are not however to conclude from this, that the labors of the various able and judicious

writers of this school, upon the different branches of intellectual and moral science have been wholly lost. Much in all their works, and many entire productions, possess a merit independent of the truth or falsehood of the theories alluded to above. Their analysis and description of the intellectual powers, though perhaps objectionable in some particulars, include a great deal of instructive and interesting discussion ; and wear, especially in the hands of Dugald Stewart, the most agreeable and entertaining shape. In ethics, politics, and political economy, they have furnished important contributions to the stock of knowledge. Adam Smith has given a text-book to the last of these sciences, and thereby secured a higher and more durable reputation than any writer on moral science since the time of Locke, with the single exception of Montesquieu. The works of the illustrious author of the *Wealth of Nations* exhibit the delightful union of fine taste with power and comprehensiveness of thought ; which is also exemplified in a remarkable degree in those of Dugald Stewart ; and which forms the charm of the most celebrated productions of the same class that have been handed down to us from remote antiquity by the Platos, the Ciceros, and the Senecas. The extreme rarity of the combination of qualities necessary to produce such works, which demand the exercise of the different and, in some degree, inconsistent powers of thought and feeling, together with the deep and permanent importance of the subjects they treat, place them perhaps at the head of all the achievements of the human mind. Thought and feeling are the two great departments of our higher nature. To bring into action either of these faculties with remarkable success, is in general all that can be done by an understanding even of the first order, because the developement and habitual exercise of one of them, when it does not suppose the absence, commonly injures the vigor of the other ; but when this result is avoided by the effect of an extraordinary natural constitution, or a particularly favorable culture, and the two are exhibited together in an equal, and that the highest degree of perfection, they indicate, of course, the complete man. We may add that Hume, notwithstanding the exceptionable character of some of his works, has displayed in others a power of observation and reflection, and in all an elegance of style, that render him one of the principal ornaments of the Scotch school of philosophy. Reid, whose merit depends more immediately and exclusively

on the correctness of his metaphysical notions, which, as we have seen, are somewhat questionable, has perhaps less chance, than the writers whom we have just named, of maintaining his reputation at a very high point, although he can never be viewed in any other light than as an honest, able, judicious, and in some instances, at least, not unsuccessful inquirer after truth.

The last writer of this school is the late Dr Brown, whose 'Lectures' have attracted a good deal of attention in this country. With every disposition to do him full justice, we are compelled to say, that we think he owes the estimation in which he is held among us (for in his own country and on the Continent of Europe he is little known or valued) more to the strong evidence of good feelings and intentions, that appears so plainly in his works, than to any great actual merit which they possess, either of substance or style. The principal peculiarity of his metaphysical system is an attempt to revive the most absurd and dangerous of the paradoxes of the skeptical school. His first work was a defence and explanation of the hypothesis of Hume respecting our idea of the Relation of Cause and Effect; and in his 'Lectures' he brings forward the same system with much complacency, raises it into extraordinary importance, and makes it, as it were, the foundation of his philosophy. So anxious was Brown to establish this theory, that rather than abandon it, he had persuaded himself to believe (in opposition to the well known and unanswerable objection of Dr Reid) that day is the cause of night, and night of day, because they succeed each other in the order of time; although he has not explained why the world had not hitherto connected with these antecedents and consequents the notion of *power*, which it regularly connects with so many others. In the same way the learned Doctor would doubtless have proved, if necessary, with equal pomp of language, that the snows of February are the cause of the blooming vegetation of May, and the effect of the warm suns of September; or that the twenty-four letters, which succeed each other both in place and time, as parts of the alphabet, are a chain of causes and effects which may be regularly traced from the last effect, *Omega*, to the first cause, *Alpha*. On this system, the world is governed by a principle resembling the *foreordained harmony* of Leibnitz; and the infinite varieties of action which are going on around us, are nicely calculated beforehand, so that, without there being any mutual connexion

between them, each takes place exactly at the right moment ; as each of the various parts of a piece of clock-work performs its respective operations in a manner entirely independent of all the rest. If water rise to a certain height in a tube from which the air has been exhausted, it is not because the withdrawing of the air has a natural tendency to facilitate the rising of the water, but because it was foreordained that the water should rise at the moment immediately following that in which the air was withdrawn. But who foreordained this harmony ? Who arranged this vast piece of clock-work ? One of the results of the admirable theory in question is to deprive us of the leading argument in proof of the existence of God, who is only known to us in natural religion as the Great First Cause. Dr Brown; who seems to have been sincerely and deeply religious, has endeavored to escape from this consequence, by inventing one of the elementary principles of belief, which are always at hand in the Scotch school upon any emergency, to supply the place of the logical conviction resulting from the necessary connexion of causes and effects. Upon the value of these elementary principles, we have already made some remarks, and shall only add here, that the supposition of an instinctive and irresistible belief in the necessary connexion of antecedents and consequents in time as such, is too evidently false even to admit of an argument in its support. The same views which led Dr Brown to deny the reality of our idea of *power*, are followed out into various other consequences, and lead to assertions, which, even if susceptible, as we are willing to hope they may be, of satisfactory explanations, are, in our opinion, to say the least, very unfortunate modes of expression. As *power* is nothing, so all other qualities, physical and moral, are in themselves nothing. They are *states* of matter or of mind ; and then again, they are mind or matter itself in certain states ; ‘ All the feelings and thoughts of the mind are only the mind itself existing in certain states.’* Thus ill-humor is a wealthy

* To call our affections and thoughts *states* of the mind, is an incorrect use of terms, and of course an alteration for the worse, of the common phraseology. To say that our affections and thoughts are the mind itself existing in certain states, is an assertion not only wholly inadmissible in itself, but directly at variance with the former one. It is impossible therefore that both can be true ; yet Dr Brown continually interchanges and employs them in succession throughout his work, as if he supposed them to mean one and the same thing. It would be difficult to produce a stronger instance of confusion in thought and language.

valetudinarian in a fit of the gout, and ambition a *Deliverer* at the head of his army; beauty, a pretty girl of sixteen, and learning, a doctor of divinity, law, or medicine. 'There is no virtue in nature,' and of course no vice. What then, we may pertinently ask, becomes of the difference between them which has sometimes been considered of importance? But substances as well as qualities vanish under the powerful analysis of our metaphysical magician. 'There is no *virtue* in nature more than there is *quadruped* or *substance*.' If then, neither substances nor qualities have any reality, we would gladly learn what sort of creatures compose the world in which we live, move, and have our being. These we say are unfortunate forms of expression (for in Dr Brown we are willing to consider them as nothing more), and could perhaps be satisfactorily explained; but then the same explanation would be fatal to the principles on which the Doctor denies the reality of our idea of *power*, and which form the leading feature in his work. We consider his 'Lectures' as belonging, in the main, to a class of books more dangerous and mischievous than any other, those in which false and vicious principles are maintained with honest conviction by persons of undoubted good intentions, and clothed in such a dress as not to shock the moral feeling of the public. Presented in this questionable shape, these principles are unsuspectingly adopted by minds that would not otherwise have come in contact with them; and being once adopted, they of course work out their necessary effects, which are in no way neutralized by the skin-deep gilding under which the poison was exhibited. The style of Dr Brown has, in our opinion, as little to recommend it as his matter. It is such a one as might be called good in a promising school-boy; easy and copious, but verbose, feeble, and overlaid with tasteless ornament and trivial learning. It forms a sorry contrast with the manly and significant simplicity of the 'Essay on the Human Understanding.' For these reasons we cannot but regret that the work has obtained so much currency among us; and venture to hope that it will not long be allowed to usurp, in our most respectable institutions for education, the place which was once occupied by the great master of intellectual science.

Such, however, are the general characteristics of the Scotch philosophy; entirely baseless when viewed as a mere expression of the common sense of the world; and when considered as a form of *idealism*, a defective and untenable exposition

of a theory essentially false. At about the same time when this doctrine was growing up in Scotland, another came into notice in the North of Germany, which engaged for many years a large share of the public attention, and indeed excited a stronger immediate sensation than any philosophical system which has ever been promulgated. We allude of course to the *Transcendental Philosophy*, founded by the celebrated Kant, a professor at the University of Königsberg in Prussia. This writer states in the introduction to his *Criticism on Pure Reason*, that having been convinced by the arguments of Hume that the idea of *power* is not obtained by sensation or reflection, instead of denying with the Scotch skeptic the reality of this idea (which we are conscious of possessing), he drew the conclusion that it must be an original or innate possession of the mind. Having come to this opinion respecting our notion of *power*, or the relation between causes and effects, he was naturally led to inquire whether there were not other ideas which were also independent of sensation and reflection, and which formed, as it were, a part of our intellectual substance. The result of his researches was, that there are a considerable number of ideas of this kind, which he arranges under the two heads of *sensible* and *intellectual* ideas. The first division includes only the two notions of *space* and *time*; the second, that of *power*, and some ten or twelve more, which we need not recapitulate. The rule adopted by Kant for discovering which of our ideas are innate, was the following.—On reviewing your ideas, whenever you come to one which strikes you as necessary, so that having once obtained it, you cannot possibly suppose it not to exist, you may be sure that it is not the product of sensation or reflection, but an original possession of the mind. Thus we can easily conceive the non-existence of all extended objects, but having once obtained the idea of *extension* or *space*, we cannot conceive its non-existence. The notion of *extension* or *space* is therefore transcendental and original, while those of the qualities of particular extended objects are the results of sensation. These two classes of ideas we naturally connect together in the habitual exercise of our intellectual powers, so that all our notions of individual objects are combinations of one or more ideas belonging to each class; just as the idea which a man, looking through a piece of colored glass, forms of the object before him, is a combined result of the sensible qualities of the object and of the color of the glass.

This is the illustration which has been employed by the disciples of Kant to explain their theory. Hence we know nothing of the real character of the external world, because we never see it except in combination with some ingredient furnished by our own minds; but we are certain of the reality of our transcendental notions, because they are immediate objects of consciousness, as they exist in their own nature, and unmingled with any other element. Kant therefore abandons the external world to the skeptics, and founds the certainty of our knowledge upon the supposed reality of the notions originally inherent in our own understanding. Such is the general outline of this system, which is traced with sufficient distinctness in the first chapters of the *Criticism on Pure Reason*. It is afterwards pursued by its author, in that and other works, into an immense variety of consequences. For the purpose of expressing himself with more precision, Kant invented a complete metaphysical nomenclature, so that the study of his writings is equivalent, even for those who are familiar with German, to the learning of a new language. This task will of course be regarded as unnecessary by those who reject the fundamental principle, from which all his consequences are deduced, and with which, if it be erroneous, they must necessarily fall. Professor Cousin admits the system so far as it affirms the reality of innate ideas, but rejects it where it calls in question that of the external world. His remarks upon it are as follows.

‘It was reserved for Germany, for that serious and contemplative country which had already produced Leibnitz and Wolf, to give to idealism its proper representative, who was no other than the illustrious Kant. Kant is, like Locke, as respects his method, a disciple of Descartes, and pursues the same course of free inquiry and accurate observation of facts, which will for ever remain the distinguishing characteristic of modern philosophy. Kant carefully separates the provinces of faith and knowledge, and commences his inquiry with an examination of the operations of the mind; but he differs from Locke, in attaching himself to a different class of these operations, from that which was chiefly observed by the latter philosopher. The great object of Kant was to take a survey of the understanding as it exists independently of sensation, and to ascertain the laws which regulate its operations. It is his glory to have furnished, as it were, an exact account of these laws. Not content with indicating their existence, and classing them in a methodical way, he describes

their mode of action, and follows them into all their applications. *Apparet domus intus.* Kant is the real founder of the philosophy of the mind; but his genius was too bold and creative to stop at this point. After enumerating, classing, and describing the laws of thought, he inquires how, from a contemplation of these laws, we arrive at a knowledge of the material world,—of God, and of everything foreign to our own intelligence. He maintains that as these laws are merely qualities of the mind, we cannot logically deduce from our knowledge of their reality, that of anything else. We are no doubt conscious of believing in the existence of God, and of the external world, but we only believe it as it is known to ourselves; and we cannot apply the conviction we have of their reality, to the external object as it exists independently of our minds. Thus Kant, by dwelling continually in the depths of the understanding, mistook it in a manner for the only real world; and while he enriched the philosophy of the mind with new discoveries, made it much too exclusively the object of his inquiries. Fichte however goes still farther than his master in the same track. According to Kant, our notions of external objects are modified by the laws of our own mind, which regulate the perception of them. Fichte affirms that, as external objects are only known to us by our perceptions, they are in fact nothing more than inferences deduced by the understanding from its own operations, and only exist as ideas or affections of the understanding. The understanding is therefore the principle, not only of all perception, but of all existence. Thus Fichte absolutely denies the reality of the external world, which Kant merely considered as incapable of proof. Their views of the nature of God were equally at variance. Kant thought that we have an instinctive or intuitive belief in God, as a being entirely distinct from our own minds. According to Fichte, God is nothing more than *mind*, considered as existing absolutely, and not individualized in any particular being. Now although we are willing enough to regard the human mind as the only thing in nature that has a real existence, it is repugnant to our feelings, gentlemen, to regard it as identical with God. Fichte therefore distinguishes between the mind, as it is an object of our consciousness, and the mind as it really exists. The former is the mind, the *moi*, existing in each individual, as we commonly understand the term; the latter is the substance or essence of the mind, as it exists independently of any individual, and this is God himself. When we have reached this point, we have obviously arrived at the last extreme of idealism, just as the sensual system had attained its complete development, when it represented the mind as a bundle of sensible notions, and God as only another name for the material world. The sys-

tem of Kant and Fichte reduces our intellectual faculties, with all the ideas upon which they are employed, to reflection, as that of Locke and Condillac reduced them all to sensation; and as sensualism, in its last and most degrading results, denies the existence of the mind by identifying it with matter, so idealism, in its sublime extravagance, arrives at the same conclusion in a different way, by identifying the mind with God.'

For those who are satisfied with the account given by Locke of the manner in which we acquire the idea of *power*, the vast and cumbrous machinery of the Transcendental Philosophy, which was originally resorted to for the purpose of supplying a better one, is of course, when considered in its origin, entirely superfluous. As respects the method by which Kant distinguishes between transcendental and sensible ideas, we may remark, that he seems to confound the idea and its object, the notion and the thing known. 'Whenever,' says he, 'in reviewing our ideas, we come to one, of which, having once acquired it, we cannot conceive the non-existence, that idea is transcendental.' But what idea is there of which we cannot conceive the non-existence? Ideas exist only in our minds, and while their objects are immediately under our contemplation. Not one can be named, which does not cease to exist a hundred times a day. That of *space*, for example, which is regarded by Kant as transcendental, ceases to exist whenever we cease to think of *space*. It is not our idea of space, but space itself, of which we cannot conceive the non-existence. The necessity belongs not to the notion, but to the thing known. But because the things which we mean by *space* and *time*, that is, extension and duration, considered in the abstract, cannot cease to exist, does it follow that we get our ideas of these things in a different way from that in which we obtain all others? Our ideas of space and time are obtained, like all the rest of our abstract notions, by generalizing our particular ideas of the extension and duration of particular objects and actions; and when we say that we can conceive the non-existence of *beauty*, *justice*, *substance*, *man*, and cannot conceive the non-existence of *space* and *time*, the reason of the difference evidently lies in the nature of the things intended by these terms, and not in the nature of our ideas of them, or the manner in which these ideas are respectively acquired.

These considerations apply rather to the form in which the theory of innate or original ideas is stated by Kant, than to the

theory itself. But, notwithstanding these and perhaps other objections that might be made to some of his particular views, notwithstanding the repulsive and fatiguing character of his style, his works are generally considered, by the partisans of idealism, as the most complete and satisfactory statement of that system, that has ever appeared, either in ancient or modern times. It seems proper, therefore, to make the few remarks which we propose to offer on the subject, with immediate reference to the Transcendental Philosophy, and we have accordingly reserved them for this part of the present article.

By those who are acquainted with the theory of innate or original ideas, only through the detailed, and in general to us very satisfactory refutation of it given by Locke, it may perhaps be deemed a mere chimera, long since exploded, and unworthy of the least notice at the present day. It is nevertheless a doctrine that has in all ages, including the present, been held by many philosophers of the highest rank; and is indeed represented, not without some appearance of correctness, by the writer now before us, as one of the two leading answers that have been given, alike in ancient and in modern times, to the problem of the origin of our knowledge. The great names of Plato, Descartes, and Leibnitz, must for ever secure it from contempt, whatever judgment we may form of its actual value. But while we feel every disposition to speak with respect of an opinion patronized by these illustrious ornaments of our race, we are bound to say that the doctrine of innate ideas, whether critically or historically considered, presents itself to our minds less as a real philosophical solution of the great question above alluded to, than as a bold attempt, by men of creative genius and brilliant imagination, two or three times repeated in the course of ages, to solve this problem before the knowledge and application of the true methods of scientific inquiry had rendered the solution of it possible. Plato appears to have invented it, if he did not borrow it from the Oriental schools; and at all events he embellished it with the sublime and beautiful poetical coloring which he knew how to throw over all the subjects he chose to treat. But no sooner did his great disciple discover the experimental method of inquiry, and direct it, with the natural energy of his sterner mind, to intellectual science, than the innate ideas or *archetypes* of his master vanish into air. Yet the system, as understood and presented by Plato, is perhaps more easily susceptible of an

explanation conformable to the truth, than in any of its other forms. In modern times again, the speculations of the French metaphysicians precede the restoration of the experimental philosophy, to the revival of which they contributed so much themselves, but which they failed so completely in turning to practical account, either in physical or moral science. No sooner does the firm hand of Locke, the worthy representative in modern times of the mighty Stagyrice, again put in use this masterly machine, than the theory of innate ideas is again recognised as a brilliant but visionary fabric, belonging to that region of 'Cloudland gorgeous land,' to which Aristotle had before consigned it when it was first descried in Greece. In both cases, the doctrine which attributes the origin of all our knowledge indirectly or directly to experience, having been once distinctly and powerfully stated, seems to have been pretty generally adopted by judicious men. The opposite theory, no doubt, had its partisans in ancient Greece, after the time of Aristotle, and in modern Europe since that of Locke; but they have been, for the most part, persons in whose minds imagination seemed to predominate over the other faculties, or whose judgments were biassed by interested motives. With this latter class we have ventured to identify the idealists of the present day, who, as we have already remarked, are evidently influenced by the political reaction resulting from the excesses in doctrine and practice of the French Revolutionists. Independently of this consideration, there seems to be a restlessness in our nature, which leads us, when in the progress of improvement we have attained the truth, not to be satisfied with it, but still to wander on in search of new discoveries, although every step we take necessarily carries us farther from the point at which we profess to aim. We see this disposition plainly exemplified in the department of the fine arts, where a period of good taste is uniformly followed by one, of which the predominant characteristic is extravagance, and a hankering after the exploded errors of a barbarous age. The principle no doubt exercises its influence with equal certainty in philosophy. It is to this cause that we may attribute the reappearance of idealism in the later schools of ancient Greece, and in part its present currency on the Continent of Europe. If there be any case which furnishes an exception to these remarks, it is doubtless that of Kant, in whose mind imagination seems to have had no place, and whose natural turn was exclusively for the

most severe and rigorous methods of inquiry. With him the immediate motive for embracing idealism was a strong desire to escape from the conclusions of the skeptical school, against which he saw no other resource ; but we deem it a singular phenomenon, that a person in whose intellect judgment was so decidedly the leading power, should have acquiesced in the feeble and flimsy reasoning by which the skeptics deduced their conclusions from the principles of Locke, and should, under any circumstances, have rested with such complete conviction upon the intangible and fleeting, though beautiful visions of idealism.

But one exception, admitting it to be real, does not change the rule ; and idealism, therefore, historically viewed, presents itself as an unsubstantial dream, which charms the infantile period of intellectual philosophy, rather than as one of two opinions which have nearly divided the thinking men of all ages and nations. Critically viewed, the system has, we think, the same general characteristics. There is a wild and ethereal air about it, that catches the attention and delights the fancy. It fills the mind with lofty and glorious imaginations, transposts us from the cold and formal realities of the world around us, into empyreal regions, the perpetual abodes of light, truth, purity, and happiness. It gratifies our longing after a nobler and a loftier destiny than that which we can here aspire to, by bringing our minds into nearer contact,—identifying them, indeed, by some mysterious and inexplicable bond of union,—with the sublime spirit whose energy pervades and governs the Universe. It lends itself easily to all the beauties of rhetorical embellishment, and when it appears in its natural dress, always wears the seductive graces of an elegant style. Its professors are a sort of inspired prophets. Their course of thought is well described by Akenside, who had himself caught, in his favorite Greek studies, the spirit of these philosophers.

‘The high-born soul
Disdains to rest her heaven-aspiring wing
Beneath its native quarry. Tired of earth
And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft
Through fields of air ; pursues the flying storm ;
Rides on the vollied lightning through the heavens ;
Or, yoked with whirlwinds and the northern blast,
Sweeps the long tract of day.’

The idealists are recognised indeed by Cicero as of nobler race than the partisans of opposite opinions. ‘All other phi-

losophers,' says he, 'appear like *Plebeians* when compared with the followers of Plato.' This system partakes, in short, of the nature and essence of poetry, as it properly appertains to that period in the progress of the intellect when poetry is most cultivated and valued. And if we feel some regret at seeing the splendid and elegant constructions of idealism subside into narrower dimensions and simpler forms under the touch of a rigorous method, there is yet much consolation in reflecting, that the pleasure we receive from dwelling upon these imaginations of the poetical school of philosophy, as upon those of poetry itself, furnishes an indirect evidence of the elevated nature of our intellectual being. But when we come to a close survey of the doctrines of the idealists, we find that, as they are animated by the spirit of poetry, so they share the faults to which it naturally leads. They are too apt, like that 'sweet seducer of youth,' 'to accommodate the shows of things' to the desires of the mind,' rather than to the reality of sober fact. Their doctrine is vague, undefined, and somewhat difficult to come at in strict detail. It presents itself under various shapes, in the works of different writers. In Plato, ideas are the archetypes or models of created things, which dwell eternally in the Divine Mind, and in order to perceive them, we must elevate ourselves to a nearer intimacy and mysterious community of thought with God. In Malebranche,—the French Plato, as Count de Maistre calls him,—the human mind is a ray of light emanating from the divine substance, but not entirely separated from it, and our general notions are still, as in Plato, conceived, as it were, in the bosom of the Deity. In Kant,—who has somewhat clipped the wings of idealism in his attempt to reduce it to a precise and logical expression,—our general notions exist only in our own minds, have no corresponding objects in nature, and are forms with which we dress up the unsubstantial images presented by the senses, in order to give them 'a local habitation and a name.' In the Edinburgh writers, the system appears in so reduced a shape, that we hardly recognise it, and only perceive some traces of its tone of dogmatism and inspiration in the confidence with which they assure us of the existence of certain elementary principles in the mind, without pretending to account for the manner in which they got there. With the followers of Kant, again, it takes a new flight. Our general ideas compose not only the forms but the substance of their supposed objects;

and the mind not only communes with God, and thinks and feels in God, but is itself God, man, and the universe. The mere variety of these views of the system, independently of the towering extravagance of most of them, would render it very doubtful whether they really represented any valuable leading principle; and the vague and figurative forms of expression which are generally employed by the idealists, would also naturally lead us to the same conclusion. Precise and correct thoughts commonly clothe themselves in simple, accurate, and intelligible language. Hence, when we find philosophical writers habitually indulging in a loose and indefinite phraseology, made up, as it were, of a succession of bold figures, we are tempted to suspect that they feel an instinctive consciousness that their opinions would not stand examination if presented in a simple dress. Such, however, is in general the character of the style of the idealists. They abstain almost wholly from strict definition, and often draw conclusions with the utmost apparent confidence, from premises with which a common reasoner cannot unite them by the slightest bond of connexion. 'Truth,' says Count de Maistre, 'is nothing more than an equation between our ideas and the objects they represent. Now if the former member of this equation be not innate, preëxistent, and unchangeable, the latter would also be variable, and there would be no truth. Therefore all our ideas are innate.' In the same way it would be easy to prove that the images which appear in a mirror must necessarily be innate, in order to resemble their originals. 'All our ideas,' says the same writer, 'are entirely foreign to the senses, by the intellectual act which affirms,' (*par l'acte intellectuel qui affirme.*) By this loose and inaccurate phrase, the Count seems to intend, that because the act of affirming or denying any proposition is wholly intellectual, the ideas contained in the proposition affirmed or denied must be necessarily foreign to the senses; as if these ideas, and the act of affirmation or denial, were one and the same thing. We purposely select these examples of loose expression and incoherent reasoning from the less extravagant passages in the works of a really able writer, to show the faults that prevail in the ordinary and better manner of this school. Kant and his followers, the only idealists who pretend to strict and logical forms of expression, have given their language the same indistinctness and obscurity which belongs to that of all the rest, by employing a new and almost unintelligible nomenclature.

Their terms not being settled by familiar usage or precise explanation, really convey, notwithstanding their exact and scientific air, no definite meaning to the mind of the reader, and serve, on the contrary, to shroud the author's opinions under a misty veil, equivalent in effect, though by no means in attraction, to the wild and vague poetical imagery of the preceding writers of the same class.

These general and superficial views of the ideal theory would naturally, we think, produce a strong impression against it, in the minds of judicious men. If, however, it were necessary to test its correctness by a more thorough examination, and if, leaving out of view the obviously extravagant imaginations of some of its partisans, we attempt to grasp the essential principle of the system, as professed by the highest authorities, particularly Kant and his followers, and compare it with that of Locke, there will appear, in our opinion, a very decided preponderance of probabilities in favor of the latter. The two theories, briefly stated in their simplest elements, seem to be nearly as follows.

On the system of Locke, our perceptions are expressions of external objects, and our abstract ideas are generalizations of these objects, their qualities, and the relations we observe between them. On the ideal system, our perceptions are composed of two distinct parts, one of which consists of sensible images, and the other of general notions. The former part only is the result of sensation, the latter being always supplied by the mind, out of a fund of original and innate ideas with which it is provided for this purpose. When I see, for example, a white globe, the perception I have of it is, according to Locke, a simple image or expression of the object; and by afterwards considering it under different points of view, I obtain the abstract notions of whiteness, roundness, and substance. On the ideal system, I perceive *whiteness* and *roundness*, to which the mind adds *substance*, from its own stock, and thus completes the perception. To this system there are, we think, several solid objections, some of which we shall very briefly indicate.

1. For those who are satisfied with the manner in which Locke describes the origin of our general notions (and we have repeatedly professed ourselves to be of that number), the ideal system is unphilosophical, because it resorts to a new principle, or rather to a vast apparatus of new metaphysical machinery, to find a cause for effects which are fully accounted for by those already known to be in operation.

2. The phrase *innate* or *original ideas*, involves a direct contradiction in terms. Ideas are expressions or representations of things, and suppose of course the previous presence to the mind of the things they represent, just as the image in a mirror supposes the presence of the object reflected; while the epithet *innate* or *original* supposes that the object is not, and never has been, present to the mind. An innate idea is, therefore, an image without an object, a copy without a model, a translation without an original, and belongs to the same category with a three-legged quadruped, or a triangle with two sides.

Innate or original ideas, if they in fact existed, would necessarily represent objects with which the mind had become acquainted in a previous state of existence; and such was the opinion entertained of them by Plato, who affirms that all our knowledge is only recollection. This explanation of the doctrine, if not plausible, is at least consistent in terms; but, even on this supposition, it would be difficult to conceive how the ideas which the mind brings with it from another world should happen to fit so exactly the objects we meet with in this, and why we should never recollect any of our ante-natal knowledge until the precise moment when a fact exactly similar comes within our observation upon this visible diurnal sphere.

3. If we refer our general notions, including that of substance, which is the most general of all, exclusively to the mind, it is not easy to see what we leave as the immediate objects of perception. I see, for example, a white globe, that is, a white round substance, something white and round, or let it be the 'something large and round,' which the little girl in Southey's ballad saw her brother rolling about upon the battle-field of Blenheim, and which afterwards proved to be the skull of some poor fellow who was killed in the great victory. According to the idealists, the substance of the skull, the *something* which we perceive to be large and round, exists only in the spectator's mind. One is tempted to think that a person must have but little brain in his own skull, who can find room within it for the skulls of other people. But admitting, for argument's sake, that the skull exists only in the brain of the spectator, what then remains without as the external object of perception? Apparently, the size, color, and figure of the skull. But size, color, and figure are merely qualities, and can have no real existence separately from the substance to

which they are attached. If, then, the substance of the skull be in the brain of the spectator, its qualities, if they exist at all, must be there also. But if neither the substance nor the qualities of the skull have any existence, excepting in the brain of the spectator, what, we ask again, remains without as the external object of perception? Evidently nothing; and such has been, in fact, in all ages, the conclusion of the consistent idealists, who have uniformly ended by denying the reality of the material world. This is of course a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole theory. But let us admit again, for argument's sake, that although the substance of the skull exist only in the brain of the spectator, its size, color, and figure remain without as the direct objects of perception, and see how far the supposition will be found to accord with the leading principles of the idealist. The direct objects of perception are then, we will suppose, the shape, color, and size of the skull, considered independently of its substance. But shape, color, and size, considered independently of the substance to which they are attached, are merely general notions, as, in the present case, *largeness*, *whiteness*, and *roundness*. On this system, therefore, the direct objects of perception are the general or abstract notions of sensible qualities. Remark now the strange inconsistency of this result of the ideal theory, with the notions that led to its adoption. The precise reason why the idealists deem it necessary to resort to the supposition of innate ideas is, that they cannot admit the possibility that general notions can be obtained, even indirectly, through the senses; and we now find them representing these same general notions as the direct and only objects of sensation. If general notions be not even indirectly furnished by the senses, how can they be the direct objects of perception? If they be the direct objects of perception, why invent an entirely new metaphysical system to account for their origin, independently of the senses? We profess ourselves unable to reconcile these contradictions, and, until better advised, shall adhere, in regard to these points, to the homely philosophy, *paupertina philosophia*, as Liebnitz calls it, of Locke. The object of little Wilhelmine's perception, in the case above alluded to, was the skull itself, composed of substance and qualities, the 'something large and round,' which she carried to her grandfather; and had old Caspar possessed as good a notion of metaphysics as he appears to have had of morals, instead of reading her a lecture upon the

battle of Blenheim, he would have explained this to her, and have added, that by reflecting upon the skull merely in reference to its color, size, and shape, she would obtain the abstract ideas of *whiteness*, *largeness*, and *roundness*, and by considering it as an object of perception and knowledge, independently of any of its qualities, that of *substance*.

‘Observe,’ says the Count de Maistre, ‘a triangle, whether real or imaginary. You had certainly no idea of it before you saw it; but though you had no idea of this triangle, you had the idea of a triangle in general, or of *triangleness* (*triangulité*), and thus it is that we may know and not know the same thing at the same time, when considered under different points of view.’

The meaning of this seems to be, that when I see a triangle, my eye furnishes me the sensible ideas of *equilateralness*, *right-angledness*, and so forth, according to its particular form, and that my mind adds from its own stock and substance the idea of *triangleness*, which completes the perception. The inconsistency of the notions of the idealists is still more apparent in this example than in the last. At the same time that certain general notions, such as *equilateralness*, *right-angledness*, and the like, are represented as direct objects of perception (although the very essence of the theory consists in proving that we cannot possibly obtain our general notions, either directly or indirectly, though the senses), at the same time, we say, another general notion, *triangleness*, of precisely the same kind (they being all generalizations of the forms of sensible objects), is declared to be innate. We profess ourselves unable to comprehend the reasons of this distinction. If we can perceive *equilateralness* and *right-angledness*, why may not we perceive *triangleness*? and why must this last idea be declared *innate*, in order to account for its origin? If we cannot perceive *triangleness*, and it be in fact an innate idea, how do we manage to perceive *equilateralness* and *right-angledness*, and why are not these also innate, being general notions of the very same class? Why is it not as rational to suppose that we see *triangleness* and add to it, or, to use the language of the idealists, *impose upon it, equilateralness or right-angledness*, as to suppose that we perceive these latter ideas, and *impose triangleness upon them*? Or, in the other case of the poor fellow’s skull at Blenheim, is it not as natural to suppose that we see *skullness*, and impose upon it *largeness, whiteness, or*

roundness, as that we see *largeness*, *whiteness*, and *roundness*, and impose upon them *skullness*? Is it not, in fact, rather more natural to impose the form upon the substance, than the substance upon the form? Would not a sculptor, who was in the habit of using correct language, be more likely, if he employed the expression at all, to say that he imposed the form of the Venus de Medicis upon a block of marble, than that he imposed a block of marble upon the form of that statue? We must leave it to the sagacity of the intelligent reader to answer these questions, and to decide whether the person who is credulous enough to believe in any of these suppositions, be not in fact the party really *imposed upon*.

4. By representing our notion of substance as innate, and our abstract ideas of the sensible qualities of bodies as the direct objects of perception, the idealists not only contradict flatly their own leading principles, but destroy the reality of the material world. This conclusion has accordingly, as we have just remarked, been drawn by all the consistent partisans of the theory in ancient and modern times. Professor Cousin attempts to escape from it, and has undertaken to neutralize the extremes of sensualism and idealism, by combining them in his own way in one system; but as he holds that there is only one substance in nature, and no substantial distinction between God, man, and the material world, his doctrine is equivalent to a denial of the real existence of two at least out of the three, and ends in Pantheism, that is, Atheism. Now, for those who admit the fact of perception (which is admitted by all the idealists), a denial of the reality of the external world involves, as we have already remarked, a logical absurdity, since every act supposes an agent, and every transitive act, like that of perception, an object acted on.

We need not enter any further into the nature of the objections to this theory, nor have we thought it necessary to treat the subject with much seriousness, since, notwithstanding the imposing appearance which idealism makes, under the formidable terminology of Kant, and the seductive graces which it wears in the charming style of Plato, we cannot upon the whole regard it, when reduced to its simple expression, and rigorously examined, as anything but a mass of palpable absurdities. Upon this view of the system, it may be thought difficult to account for the general favor with which it has been received by enlightened men in particular countries, at more

than one period in the history of philosophy. This difficulty is however by no means insoluble ; and idealism is far from being the only example of an absurd theory that has obtained for a time a pretty extensive prevalence. In these cases the absurdity generally gains favor, not, according to the somewhat paradoxical form of expression of the African bishop, as such, *quia absurdum*, but because it is supposed to represent and be essentially connected with some important truth. Thus the different false religions that prevail in the world, maintain their hold upon the minds of their respective adherents, because their truth is supposed to be essentially connected with that of the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul, principles so dear to the heart of man, that he will swallow without struggling the most monstrous fictions and the most revolting absurdities, rather than relinquish his faith in them. It is in like manner easy enough, upon a general survey of the history of intellectual science, to perceive the great truth which is represented by the fable of *idealism*, and which appears to be no other than the independent and substantial existence of our thinking part, '*the God within the mind.*'* This principle, which, as we have repeatedly remarked, is logically proved by all our intellectual operations, as well as clearly revealed to us by our moral feelings, beams upon the understanding in the

* 'This light and darkness in our chaos joined,
What shall divide? *The God within the mind.*'

Lord Bolingbroke, who supplied Pope with the materials of the 'Essay on Man,' probably borrowed this idea from Seneca. 'In unoquoque virorum bonorum (quis Deus incertum est) *habitat Deus.*' (Epist. 41.) In accommodating this sublime thought to the measure, the poet has somewhat impaired its correctness. We can hardly speak with propriety of *the God within the mind*. The mind is itself the God within us. In another passage of the Essay, Pope has been led in the same way into the expression of a thought directly opposite to the one he had in view.

'Count all the advantage prosperous vice attains,
'T is but what virtue flies from and disdains.
And grant the bad what happiness they would,
One they must want, which is, to *pass for good.*'

That bad men must of necessity want the happiness of passing for good, is an assertion contradicted by daily experience ; nor is this supposed happiness the object of the virtuous, whose aim, on the contrary, is not to appear good, but to be so. Pope probably intended to say, that bad men must want the consciousness of good intentions, which belongs to virtue ; and it is not a little singular how completely, in steering by the treacherous rudder, Rhyme, he has lost sight of his own meaning.

early periods of civilization, like a bright and glorious vision, not yet realized in a complete and positive shape. Under these circumstances, various false or doubtful opinions are connected with it ; amongst which is the not unnatural theory, that a thinking being, which has an existence independent of the body, must also possess thoughts which are entirely foreign to the senses. This system, which, as we have seen above, lends itself readily to the graces of poetical embellishment, circulates a while with general favor. This is the age of idealism, of Plato, and of the French metaphysicians. At length the invention of methods and the improvement of languages put another face upon the science. It is now perceived, that the mind is an independent being, extending its comprehensive grasp over the vast expanse of the universe, from the point where its flaming limits (to use the bold language of the Latin poet) are lost in the boundless ocean of infinity, to that where the energies that inform and move the grand machine centre beneath the clouded majesty of the throne of God,—but extending it by the exercise of the *faculties* with which it is endowed for this purpose ; that all our knowledge, whether of God, our own minds, or the material world, must of course be the result of the exercise of these faculties ; and that to possess ideas previously to or independent of their exercise, would be to have thought without thinking, *to know without knowing*, which is, in fact, the sum and substance of idealism. This simple, manly, intelligible, and at the same time generous, elevated, and inspiring philosophy, was substituted in ancient Greece by Aristotle, and in modern times by Locke, for the splendid dreams of Plato and Descartes. Intellectual science is now fixed ; but the mind, ever restless, and ever dissatisfied with its own possessions, undervalues the truths it has acquired, and still pushing forward on its perpetual voyage of discovery, arrives at length at the region of materialism and sensuality,—of sophists and skeptics,—of Epicurus, Pyrrho, Condillac, Helvetius, and Hume. It is now affirmed, that because the mind can only communicate with external objects through the senses, it is in fact nothing more than a faculty attached to the body ; and the system is pushed into its consequences until it ends in the denial of the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God. Alarmed for these sacred and cherished principles, which, as we have already remarked, man will make any sacrifice rather than relinquish, and casting about with

anxious impatience for the means of securing them, the mind, in the first moments of uncertainty, rejects *en masse* the whole improved doctrine which has apparently involved such fatal results, and oscillates back to the visions of its childhood, content to embrace the ideal theory, with all its absurdity, rather than abandon the glorious truths with which it is for the time supposed to be connected. Such appears to have been the origin of the second Platonism of antiquity, and of the revival of idealism in modern Europe by the Scotch philosophers, by Kant and his followers, and by the French writers of the present day. But this period of reaction is obviously in its nature a transitory one, and when the false alarm created by the sophists has subsided, the enlightened opinion of the public will quietly settle down again in the conclusions of Locke and Aristotle, which, in our view of them at least, as they exhaust the science and leave no room, on essential points, for the farther progress of real discovery, must form in all ages the creed of judicious men, and the standard to which those who may be led astray by the false lights of other theories, will be gradually rallied back from their different vagaries.

Notwithstanding the essential improbability of idealism, and the repulsive dress in which it was presented by Kant and his followers, it obtained, as our readers are aware, and, as we conceive, for the reasons just stated, an extraordinary vogue in Germany, which, however, has already in a great measure passed away. While it lasted, innumerable works were published in developement, defence, and explanation of the favorite system; but it is a remarkable fact, and one that may perhaps be regarded as an additional evidence of the essential worthlessness of the theory, that of all this multitude of books, written in many cases by able and learned men, not one, as far as we are informed, has acquired a classical character, has been translated into any foreign language, or is likely to be read with interest half a century hence. The ‘*Criticism on Pure Reason*,’ as it contained the first proclamation of a system that created so much temporary excitement, and is directly connected with the name of its author, will probably preserve a place in scientific libraries; be consulted occasionally by a learned curiosity, though very rarely, we suspect, perused from one end to the other, by the most intrepid student; and thus survive as an historical monument of one of the most remarkable aberrations of public opinion that has ever occurred.

The decline of the Transcendental Philosophy is the last in the series of the events which properly belong to the history of intellectual science, and which exclude of course those that are immediately contemporary ; the nature of which, however, we have taken occasion to indicate in the course of our remarks. From the brief and very imperfect outline that we have ventured to offer of this vast field of inquiry, it results, that the progress of opinion on these momentous subjects in ancient and modern times has been exactly parallel ; that the mind, starting from the same point of departure, has in both cases run through the same circle of theories, ascertained the same truths, and again partially lost sight of them under the influence of the same errors and delusions ; and that the great names which adorn the successive stages in this progress are not so much expressions of individual opinions, as of the general intellectual character of successive generations. We have now reached, in the modern world, the point at which philosophy was left by the ancients, when Justinian closed the schools in the Eastern Empire, and the invasion of the barbarians demolished them in the Western. The disastrous political events of that period precluded any farther improvements in any branch of knowledge ; the reaction in favor of sound and rational opinions that might have been expected in intellectual science, never occurred ; and the prevalence of idealism was succeeded immediately by a period of complete barbarism. Under the more auspicious circumstances in which the civilized world is now placed, we may anticipate a different result, and have reason to expect that public opinion, after returning from its aerial excursion with Kant and Fichte, and recovering from the causeless terrors inspired by Berkeley and Hume, will repose again with renewed pleasure and confidence on the sober certainties of Locke.

On our view of the subject, therefore, this great philosopher has in a manner fixed the metaphysical department of moral philosophy in its leading features, and left little for successors, but to remove here and there an unimportant blemish, or complete an imperfect outline. We regret to add, that the state of the other great departments of moral philosophy is far from being equally satisfactory. Ethics and Politics in particular, offer an extensive field, which will long demand the labor of inquirers, and amply reward it, if judiciously conducted. In Ethics, the modern world has yet produced no single treatise of a standard and classical character ; none, perhaps, that can

fairly be put in competition with the 'Offices' of Cicero, although that work, noble and elegant as it is, by no means possesses the correctness and precision which would be required in a text-book of the science. Kant's *Treatise on Morals* (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*) is highly valued by the partisans of the author, and is largely commended by Professor Cousin, who pronounces it to be 'the most imposing and durable monument that philosophical genius has ever erected to real disinterested virtue.' Unfortunately, as it supposes the truth of the Transcendental Metaphysics, and must stand or fall with them, it can hardly be of use to those who have not adopted that system. In England the two theories that now divide the opinion of the public are, the *moral sense* of the Scotch philosophers,—a doctrine which probably gives us a glimpse of the truth, but has not yet been stated with sufficient power and precision,—and the *Utilitarian* scheme, which found favor as presented by Paley, in consequence of the general respect for natural and revealed religion with which he had arbitrarily connected it, but which appears at the present day in its naked deformity in the hands of the cynical disciples of Jeremy Bentham,—not as a system of morals, but rather as a complete denial of the reality of moral distinctions. Everything, therefore, is yet to be done; yet such is the universal indifference on the subject in the mother country, that in quarters where we have a right to look for opinions of some authority, the terms of the question are evidently not understood.* The low state of moral science in all its branches in Great Britain is curiously evinced by the difficulty that has been found in filling the chair of this department in the new London University, and by the fact that the presidencies of the two principal scientific corporations of the kingdom, which should regularly be filled by distinguished moral philosophers, if such were to be found, are occupied in one case by a poet, and in the other by a member of Parliament. In Politics, the deficiency of standard works in the literature of modern Europe is equally remarkable, and the science is evidently still unsettled. Locke's 'Treatise on Government' is far from possessing the same complete and satisfactory character with his 'Essay on the Human Understanding'; and the notion of a *social contract*, which he held in com-

* See the article on Paley's Life and Writings, in the London Quarterly Review, for October, 1828.

mon with all the English politicians of his time, and which forms the basis of his theory, seems to be essentially erroneous. The *Spirit of Laws* is justly celebrated for the depth of thought, extent of reading, and point and beauty of language which are exhibited in it, and will ever remain a most valuable literary monument; but, unfortunately for its utility as a classical and standard work, it excels chiefly in details, and the statement of leading principles is precisely the most questionable thing about it.* The later French politicians wrote under the influence of temporary passions and interests, and receded from instead of advancing beyond the point to which the science had been brought by Montesquieu. Rousseau did little more than present, under the attractions of his powerful style, but in other respects in a less advantageous form, the theories of the English writers; and Mably, whose name was at one time distinguished, with all his apparatus of positive historical knowledge, is substantially a mere declaimer. In England little or nothing has been done since the time of Locke, towards completing the enterprise which he unfortunately failed to accomplish; the attention of those who take an interest in the subject having been, and being still, totally absorbed by controversies upon passing events. Had Burke digested his notions into a complete and formal treatise, he would have been at once the Locke and Plato of politics; and it is in his writings, occasional, fugitive, passionate,—sometimes self-contradictory as they are,—that we are to look, if anywhere, for the scattered elements, the *membra disjecta*, of a true theory of government. The system now most popular in England, regarded only the number and not the character of its adherents, is that of *radicalism*, as understood and taught by the followers of Bentham. Little can of course be looked for in politics, from a school which denies the reality of moral distinctions; but their opinions evidently gain ground, in the absence of any

* We allude to the arrangement of governments into three classes, respectively informed and kept in action by the operation of the three moral principles, *fear*, *ambition*, and *virtue*. With all the respect we entertain for Montesquieu (who seems himself to have been completely satisfied with this theory), we cannot consider it a sufficient basis for the science of politics. Independently of the positive objections that may be made to it, the negative one, that it leaves entirely out of view the influence of *property*, would be, in our opinion, quite decisive.

powerful champion of an opposite one, and threaten to subjugate the mass of the people ; an event, which, if it happen, must of course be followed by a bloody and disastrous revolution. Such at present seems to be the condition of these all-important branches of moral philosophy. We should feel ourselves highly gratified, if the cursory remarks we have now made on the subject, should induce any of the noble and gifted spirits of our own country, to turn their labors into this direction ; and can assure them beforehand, that their vigorous and persevering efforts, if made in a right spirit, will be rewarded by the general approbation of the wise and good, and by the consciousness of having rendered a great and lasting service to the world. No better model can be found for the conduct of such inquiries, whether we look at the excellence of the method pursued, or the splendid success with which it was applied, than the ‘ Essay on the Human Understanding.’ The writer, who shall do for Ethics and Politics, what Locke has done for Metaphysics, will deserve and obtain one of the highest places in the temple of true Glory.

ART. IV.—*Chansons de P. J. DE BÉRANGER.* 2 tomes. 12mo. Baudouin Frères Editeurs. Paris. 1826.

IT is but of late years that any knowledge of foreign literature has been diffused among us. Most of those now upon the scene, can remember the time when the acquisition of the French language was no common one, and when he who had read *Don Quixote* in the original, or could understand Schiller in his own tongue, was indeed *rara avis*. Thanks, however, to the rapid increase of wealth, and to the general advance of cultivation, the time has passed when these attainments, of themselves, conferred on their possessors considerable distinction in society,—attainments of little value, save as they facilitate the farther acquisition of knowledge.

Still, however, the old proverb, that he knows most, who is aware that he knows nothing, is fully verified in our case ; for those alone, who are best acquainted with the stores of foreign languages, know with how small a part of them we are generally conversant.